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# DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

HIS FAMILY-LETTERS

WITH A MEMOIR

BY

WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI

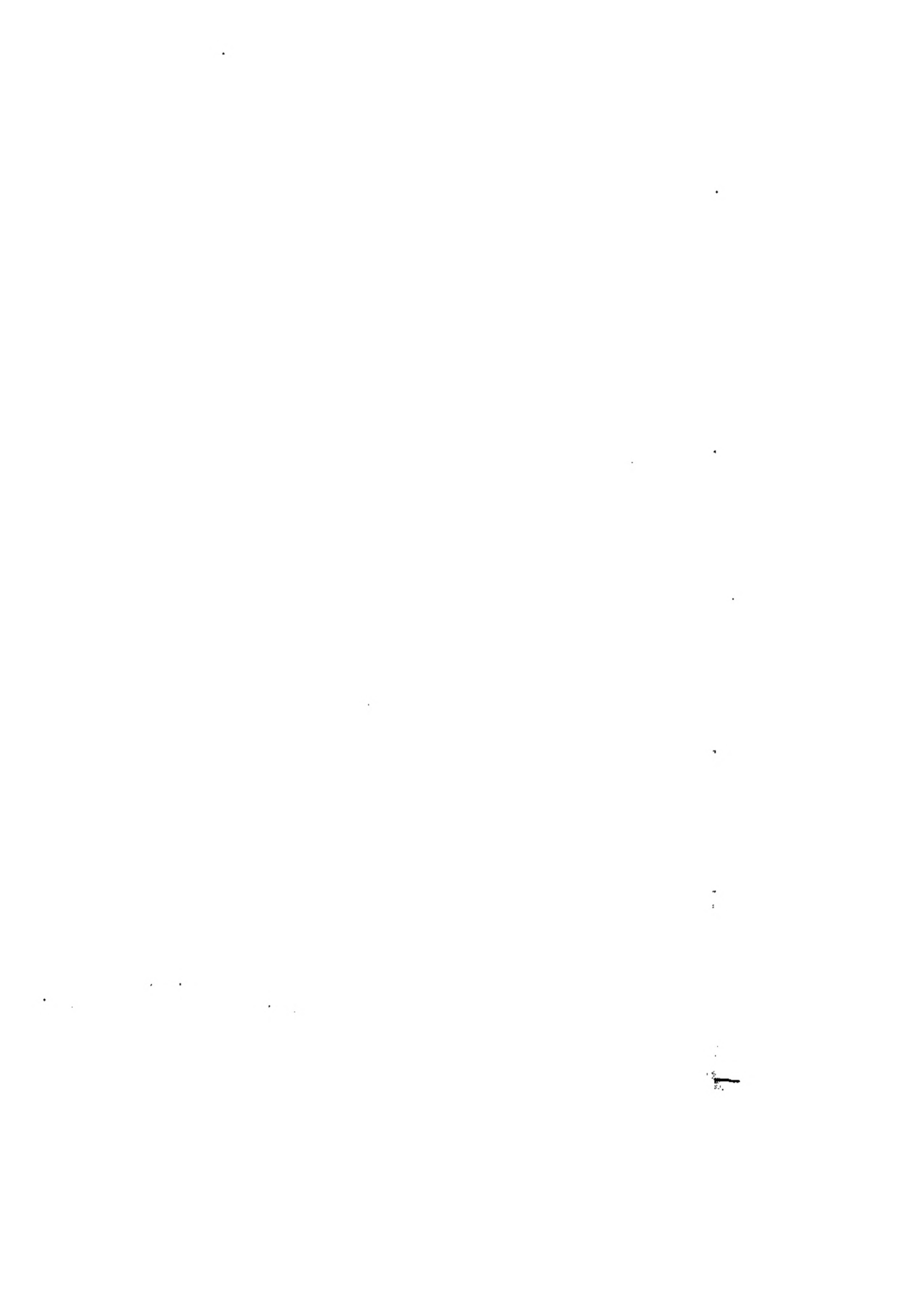
MANUS ANIMAM PINXIT

*VOL. I.*

BOSTON  
ROBERTS BROTHERS

1895





DEDICATED TO  
MY FOUR CHILDREN  
WITH A FATHER'S HOPE  
THAT RELATIVES OF  
DANTE AND CHRISTINA ROSSETTI  
AND DESCENDANTS OF  
GABRIELE AND FRANCES ROSSETTI  
WILL UPHOLD THE CREDIT OF  
THEIR PATRONYMIC.

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## P R E F A C E.

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I N his *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (1882) Mr. Hall Caine has informed us: "It was always known to be Rossetti's wish that, if at any moment after his death it should appear that the story of his life required to be written, the one friend who, during many of his later years, knew him most intimately, and to whom he unlocked the most sacred secrets of his heart, Mr. Theodore Watts, should write it, unless indeed it were undertaken by his brother William."

Dante Rossetti died on 9 April 1882; and after the lapse of a few months I decided to put his Family-Letters into shape for early publication. Mr. Watts acquiesced in the wish which I then entertained, and which I should still entertain, that he, rather than myself, should be the biographer, writing a Memoir to accompany the Letters. Doubtless he saw reason for not producing his Memoir so soon as I had been expecting it; therefore, after a rather long interval of years, I resolved in July 1894 that the Letters must now come out, and, as they could not be unlinked with a Memoir, that I myself would write it. The result is before the reader. If he would have preferred a Memoir from Mr. Watts, I sympathize with him, but the option had ceased to be mine. There are several reasons why a brother neither is nor can be the best biographer. Feeling this, I had always intended

not to write a Life of Dante Rossetti. But circumstances have proved too strong for me, and I submit to their dictate.

Had the book been published towards 1883, the Letters would have extended very little beyond those addressed to my Mother and to myself. There were then also a couple to my Father, and a very few to my Sister Christina. I am now enabled to add some to my Grandfather Gaetano Polidori, my Uncle Henry Francis Polydore, my Aunt Charlotte Lydia Polidori, and my Wife Lucy Madox Rossetti; also some others to Christina which, as they contain expressions of approval with regard to her writings, she had herself withheld. No letters to other members of the family appear to be in existence, though several must have been written.

The technical arrangement of the printed correspondence can easily be understood. The letters are all thrown into a single sequence, according to the order of date: they are lettered from A to H, for the persons respectively addressed, and each sub-division is progressively numbered within its own limits. In every case where a letter seems to require any explanatory note or observation, I have supplied this in a few preliminary words. The dates, when not written by my brother himself, were in most cases jotted down at the time by the recipient: in a few instances, where this was omitted, the dates now given are approximate. Addresses are also frequently inserted in like manner. I have reserved (and must ask the reader to pardon my mentioning so minute a point) one instance of each form of subscribed name; and have also reproduced the name in other cases where it seems more apposite to do so. In contrary instances I omit both the name and the words of subscription which precede it. Some other Family-Letters exist, addressed to the same

persons ; but these are such as even a brother cannot suppose to be of any public interest. From those here collected some passages are omitted which, on one ground or another, are considered to be unsuited for printing ; but on the whole I have been sparing of excisions. Of the items admitted, several are indeed short and scrappy ; I have not however included anything which appears to me to be entirely uninteresting to persons interested in Dante Rossetti. Some letters, otherwise slight, fix the date of a picture or poem ; others show some trait of character, or contain some pointed or diverting expression.

The letters, such as they are, shall be left to speak mainly for themselves. Their language is constantly unadorned, often colloquial ; the tone of mind in them, concentrated ; the feeling, while solid and sincere, uneffusive. Their subject-matter is very generally personal to the writer, without discursiveness of outlook, or eloquent or picturesque description ; yet the spirit is not egotistical or self-assertive. If I am wrong in these opinions, the reader will decide the point for himself.

My brother was a rapid letter-writer, and on occasion a very prompt one, but not negligent or haphazard. He always wrote to the point, without amplification, or any effort after the major or minor graces of diction or rhetoric. Multitudes of his letters must still presumably be extant in private hands ; a representative collection of them might be found to confirm the impression which I should like to ensue from the present series—that as a correspondent he was straightforward, pleasant, and noticeably free from any calculated self-display. “Disinvolto” would be the Italian word.

Some persons may approve, others will disapprove, of the publication of these Family-Letters. I print them because the doing so commends itself to my own mind. At a very

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childish age I was familiar with the old apologue of the Man and his Son and the Donkey: it impressed me as equally true and practical. I have always been conscious that opinions will be as numerous as readers, and I prefer to suit the opinions of those who happen to agree with myself.

Recently I have had a painful reason for realizing to my self a very pleasurable fact—that of the high estimation in which my brother, himself no less than his work, is now publicly held, some thirteen years after he passed away. The death of my beloved sister Christina, on 29 December 1894, called forth a flood of not undeserved but awfully very true praise; and in the eulogies of her were intermixed many warm tributes to my brother. I might say, without a conscientious voice.

As regards my Memoir, I, having large knowledge and numerous materials, have not consulted a single person except Christina, who, during the earlier weeks of my undertaking, gave me orally the benefit of many reminiscences relating chiefly to years of childhood, and often kept me right as to which I should have stumbled. On her bed of pain and rapidly approaching death she preserved a remarkably clear recollection of olden facts, and was cheered in going over them with me.

Some readers of the Memoir may be inclined to ask me—“Have you told everything, of a substantial kind, that *you* know about your deceased brother?” My answer shall be given beforehand, and without disguise: “No—I have told what I choose to tell, and have left untold what I do not choose to tell; if you want more, be pleased to consult some other informant.”

One word in conclusion. In case the present book should meet favourably with the public, I should be disposed to rummage

among my ample stock of materials, and produce a number of details relating not only to my brother, but also to other members or connexions of the family. But at the age of sixty-five a man finds the horizon of his work narrowed, and rapidly narrowing; and possibly this will not be.

W. M. ROSSETTI.

St. EDMUND'S TERRACE, LONDON.

*April 1893.*



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# ERRATA.

## VOL. I.

- Page xxi, line 12 from bottom, *for Morto read Mort*  
 " 14, line 11, *for dark-speaking read dark speaking*  
 " 54 " 8, *for Rufini read Ruffini*  
 " 59 " 6, *for Fitz-Eustace read De Wilton*  
 " 119, lines 14, 15, *for I have not the least recollection of what it was read the Study in the manner of the Early Masters*  
 " 135, line 5, *for Fuhrich read Stehla*  
 " 166 " 11, *for never read hardly*  
 " 197 " 17 etc., *for I do not know—etc. to end of paragraph, read These expressions occur in a letter to Mr. Skelton*  
 " 235 " 19, *for the earlier days of 1864 read August 1863*  
 " 254 " 21, *for perhaps in 1863 read in 1864*  
 " 274 " 17 etc., *for I cannot say—down to prominent among them read Two of these friends were Mr. Scott and Mr. Howell; perhaps also Mr. Henry Virtue Tebbs—down to Doctors' Commons*  
 " 290 " 6 from bottom, *for forgot read forget*  
 " 304 " 16, *for while read wile*  
 " 336 " 22, *for public read published*  
 " 359 " 4 from bottom, *for latter read former*  
 " 401 " 21, *for if not read and indeed*  
 " 409 " last, *for XXX read IX*  
 " 418 " 17, *for lkely read likely*  
 " 436 " 2, *for reputations read reputation,*  
 " " 9, *for object read objects*



MEMOIR  
OF  
DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI  
BY  
WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI.

*Be sure that Love ordained for souls more meek  
His roadside dells of rest.*



I.

*BIRTH.*

GABRIEL CHARLES DANTE ROSSETTI, commonly known as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was born on 12 May 1828, at No. 38 Charlotte Street, Portland Place, London. This house is the last or most northerly house, but one,<sup>1</sup> on the right-hand or eastern side of the street, as you turn into it to the left, down Weymouth Street, out of Portland Place. Charlotte Street, beyond No. 39, forms a *cul-de-sac*. The infant was baptized at the neighbouring All Souls' Church, Langham Place, as a member of the Church of England. From his father he received the name Gabriel; from his godfather the name Charles; and from poetical and literary associations the name Dante. His godfather was Mr. Charles Lyell, of Kinnordy, Kirriemuir, Forfarshire; a keen votary of Dante and Italian literature, a helpful friend to our father, and himself father of the celebrated geologist, Sir Charles Lyell. Some living members of the Lyell family continue to be well known to the present generation.

II.

*PARENTAGE.*

OUR parents were Gabriele Pasquale Giuseppe Rossetti (always called Gabriele Rossetti), and Frances Mary Lavinia

<sup>1</sup> No. 39 is now to the right hand of No. 38. It appears to me that this was not the case when we lived in No. 38, but that that was then the last house of all. The closed-up end of the street has been wholly altered since my boyish days.

Rossetti, *née* Polidori; and, before proceeding further with my narrative, I shall give some particulars about them, and about other members of the family.

Gabriele Rossetti was born on 28 February 1783, in the city of Vasto, named also (by a corruption from Longobard nomenclature) Vasto Ammone, in the Province of Abruzzo Citeriore, on the Adriatic coast of the then Kingdom of Naples. Vasto is a very ancient place, a municipal town of the Romans, then designated Histonium. We are not bound—though some enthusiasts feel themselves permitted—to believe that it was founded by the Homeric hero Diomed: its patron saint is the Archangel Michael. Gabriele was the youngest son of Nicola Rossetti, and his wife Maria Francesca, *née* Pietrocola. Nicola Rossetti was a Blacksmith, of very moderate means;<sup>1</sup> a man of somewhat severe and irascible nature, whose death ensued not long after the French-republican invasion of the Kingdom of Naples in 1799. The French put some affront upon him—I believe they gave him a smart beating for failing or neglecting to furnish required provisions; and, being unable to stomach this, or to resent it as he would have liked, his health declined, and soon he was no more. His wife belonged to a local family of fair credit: but, like other Italian women of that period, she received no scholastic training; she could not write nor even read. The name Rossetti might be translated into "Ruddykins" or "Redkins" as an English

<sup>1</sup> A Vastese connexion of mine, Signor Giuseppe Marchesani, favoured me, early in 1895, with a number of mortuary and other inscriptions which he had composed to various members of the family. I will give here the one relating to Nicola Rossetti, who probably remains otherwise unrecorded, unless by some "forlorn hic jacet." Of course anything written in a lapidary style reads less well in my English than in Marchesani's Italian. "Nicola Rossetti, Blacksmith poor and honourable, lovingly sent in boyhood to their first studies his sons, carefully nurtured in childhood. If Fortune neglected him, provident Nature ultimately distinguished, in the obscure Artizan, the well-graced Father, who, to the strokes of his hammer on the battered anvil, sent forth the sonorous and glorious echo, beyond remote Abruzzo, into Italy and other lands."

equivalent. My father used to say that the Rossetti race was an offshoot of the Della Guardia family, well known and still subsisting in Vasto; and that at some date or other certain children of the Della Guardia stock were noted for florid complexion and reddish hair, and thus got called "the Rossetti," in accordance with the Italian hobby for nicknames, and that this name gradually stuck to them as a patronymic.

Nicola and Maria Francesca Rossetti had a rather large family, four sons and three daughters, and three of the sons earned distinction. There was Domenico, who was versed (as a local historian records) "in medical science, in civil and canonical law, and in theology," writing in Italian, Latin, French, and to some extent Hebrew, and was "the first among mortals who daringly descended into the Grotto of Montecalvo near Nice." On this theme he wrote a poem in three cantos, besides other poems (two volumes, printed in Parma) and prose: he was besides an Improvisatore. Born in 1772, he died comparatively young in 1816. There was also Andrea, the eldest brother, who became a Canon of San Giuseppe in Vasto; and thirdly, Gabriele, whom I may be excused for regarding as a more important writer than even the polyglot Domenico. I might include, as showing that verse-writing ran in the family, the fourth son, Antonio, who exercised the humble calling of a wig-maker and barber: he likewise versified in an off-hand popular manner, and was of some note to his fellow-townsmen.

Gabriele Rossetti came into the world well endowed for the arts. As it turned out, he took to poetry and other forms of literature; but he might equally have excelled in drawing or in vocal music. I have before me as I write three MSS. containing specimens of his early skill as a draughtsman, done when he was twenty years old or thereabouts. The drawings are illustrations to poems (juvenile enough) of his own composition, and are surprisingly precise and dainty in execution. One would have little hesitation in calling them copper-engravings; but they are, in fact, pen-designs done with sepia, which he himself extracted



from the cuttlefish or "calamarello," so dear to Neapolitan gourmands. An ornamental headpiece, two decorative title-pages, and two landscapes founded on traditions of Claude or Gaspar Poussin, are his own inventions. One drawing is a group of two women after Mignard; and two or three others may also be copies. From my earliest childhood I have looked with astonishment on these performances as pieces of manipulation; and, after a lifetime spent among artists, I hardly know what to put beside them in their own limited line of attempt. Then, as to music, Gabriele had a beautiful tenor-voice, sweet and sonorous in a high degree. It received no regular cultivation, but was such that he was more than once urged to train himself for the operatic stage—a mode of life, however, for which he had no sort of inclination.

The local magnate was the Marchese del Vasto, of the great historic house of D'Avalos, into which the famous Vittoria Colonna married. He was feudal Lord of the Vastese, and they acknowledged themselves his "vassals," though this state of things, in the epoch of a Robespierre and a Napoleon, was not destined to continue long. The attention of the Marchese was soon called to the uncommon promise of his growing-up vassal Gabriele Rossetti, and, after some well-conducted schooling in Vasto, the youth was sent in 1804, under the patronage of this nobleman, to study in the University of Naples. His education here was cut short after a year and a month, and consequently had not a very wide range. In middle life he read Latin with ease, and retained some remnant of geometry and mathematics, but of Greek he had no knowledge. In French he was well versed, speaking the language with great fluency and an amusing assumption of the tone of a Frenchman. English he acquired by practice in Malta and in this country, and could both read and talk it tolerably enough, though he never did so when he had the option of Italian.

Rossetti was just twenty-three years of age when the Bourbon king, Ferdinand I., was turned out of his con-

tinental dominion, and had to retire into Sicily, and Joseph Bonaparte reigned in his stead. With Ferdinand vanished the Marchese del Vasto, who was his Court-Majordomo. Thus all the years of Rossetti's early manhood were passed in association with a Napoleonic and not a Bourbon order of ideas. As a sequel to his first volume of poems, published in 1807, he obtained an appointment as librettist in the operatic theatre of San Carlo, writing three or more operabooks, one of them named *Giulio Sabino*. He was kept in hot water, however, by the exigencies of managers and vocalists, and got transferred to the Curatorship of Ancient Marbles and Bronzes in the Museum of Naples. He figured in the Academy of the Arcadi as "Filidauro Labidiense." There used to be a catch,—

"Rossini, Rossetti,  
Divini, imperfetti";

but whether my father was ever linked with Rossini in any operatic production I am unable to say. Rossetti was well received at the Court of King Joachim (Murat), the successor of Joseph. I have heard him say that he knew something of almost all the Bonapartes, except only the great Napoleon. I possess a slight portrait of him done by the Princess Charlotte Bonaparte; and another of the family, Lady Dudley Stuart, acted as godmother to his daughter Christina. In my own time Prince Pierre Bonaparte (too notorious as the homicide of Victor Noir) was frequently in our house; occasionally also Prince Louis Napoleon, the unduly glorified and duly execrated Napoleon III., of whom my father would emphatically declare that he could never trace in him one grain (*neppure un' ombra*) of Liberalism. King Joachim fell in 1815, and King Ferdinand was restored to his capital city, Naples; a state of things not likely to be much to the taste of Gabriele Rossetti—who in 1813 had acted as Secretary to that part of the provisional government, sent by Joachim to Rome, which looked after public instruction and the fine arts. He did not, however, under the

restored Bourbon, lose his post in the Museum. An agitation ensued for a constitution similar to that which the Spaniards established in 1819—the secret society of the Carbonari, in which Rossetti was a member of the General Assembly, being especially active in this direction. In 1820 there was a military uprising, and Ferdinand had to grant the constitution—probably with a fixed intention of revoking it at the first opportunity. Rossetti's ode to the Dawn of the Constitution-day, "*Sei pur bella cogli astri sul crine*" ("Lovely art thou with stars in hair"), was in every Neapolitan mouth. In 1821 the king, then sojourning in Austria, abolished the constitution, and suppressed it with the aid of Austrian troops. Carbonarism was made a capital offence, and the leading constitutionalists were denounced and proscribed, among them Rossetti. He is said to have been viewed by the king with especial abhorrence, partly because various writings, not really his, were attributed to him, and partly because one of his lyrics contained the lines—

"I Sandi ed i Luvelli  
Non son finiti ancor,"

(Sands and Louvels are not yet extinct.) The reference, it will be perceived, is to the political assassination of Kotzebue by Sand, and of the Duc de Berri by Louvel, with a suggestion that a like fate might easily befall King Ferdinand. Rossetti did not say that it *ought* to befall him; but the king was not inclined to take a good-natured view of the matter, or to construe the phrase rather as a loyal warning than as an incitement to a deed of blood. The peccant poet lay concealed in Naples for three months, beginning in March 1821; finally the British admiral, Sir Graham Moore, pressed by his generous wife who knew and liked Rossetti, furnished him with a British uniform, got him off in a carriage to the harbour, and shipped him to Malta. I have before me a printed proclamation of King Ferdinand—the original document, dated 28 September 1822—granting an amnesty to persons concerned in the revolutionary or

constitutional movement, with the exception of thirteen men expressly named. My father is the thirteenth. In Malta he remained about two years and a half, holding classes (as indeed he had previously done in Naples) for instruction in the Latin and Italian languages and literature, and most liberally befriended by the English poet and diplomatist, John Hookham Frere, the translator of Aristophanes: their amicable relations continued after distance had separated them. Deep indeed were the affection and respect which Rossetti entertained for Frere. One of my vivid reminiscences is of the day when the death of Frere was announced to him,<sup>1</sup> in 1846. With tears in his half-sightless eyes and the passionate fervour of a southern Italian, my father fell on his knees, and exclaimed, "*Anima bella, benedetta sii tu, dovunque sei!*"<sup>2</sup>

Rossetti had long been a noted Improvisatore, as well as a poet in the accustomed way (he continued to improvise to some extent for a while, even after coming to London), and this, with his other gifts, made him popular in Maltese society. After a while, however, he was harassed by the spies or other emissaries of the Bourbon Government, which embittered his position so much that he resolved to have done with Malta, and settle in England. Here he arrived in January or February 1824, and fixed himself in London. He soon made acquaintance with the Polidori family, and a mutual attachment united him in marriage with the second daughter, Frances Mary Lavinia, in April 1826. He subsisted by teaching Italian, and held perhaps the foremost place in that vocation. In 1831 he was appointed Professor of Italian in King's College, London. This professorship was not a sinecure; but the students were few, and became fewer from about 1840 onwards, when the German language began decidedly to supersede the Italian in public favour. My

<sup>1</sup> The person who announced it was Mr. Edward Graham, the associate of Shelley in early youth. He had taken to the musical profession, and was a man of uncommonly handsome presence: his bodily were superior to his mental endowments.

<sup>2</sup> "Noble soul, blessed be thou wherever thou art."

father made at the best a very moderate income; at this sufficed for all the requirements of himself, and his wife and four children, and no man could be more heartily contented with what he got—more strenuous and cheerful in working for it, or more willing “to cut his coat” (he never *tailored* it) “according to his cloth.” The British religion of “keeping up appearances” was unknown—thank Heaven—in my paternal home; my father disregarded it from temperament and foreign way of thinking and living, and my mother contented it with modest or noble superiority. The tolerably thriving condition of our household declined with my father’s decline in health, which began towards 1842: interruption of professional work, waning employment, inability to take up such employment as offered, necessarily ensued. In 1843 (owing hitherto had uncommonly keen eyesight) he suddenly lost one eye through amaurosis, and the other eye was greatly weakened and in constant peril, though he was never bereft of sight totally. A real tussle for the means of subsistence now arose, but by one method or other all was tided over. Our scale of living, if somewhat more threadbare and snug, did not materially dwindle from its unassuming yet comfortable average; and no butcher nor baker nor candle-dick-maker ever had a claim upon us for a sixpence unpaid. In his closing years my father had more than one stroke of paralysis. Some of these were of a formidable kind; yet he got over them to a substantial extent, lived on in a suffering state of body, and with mental faculties weakened, though not impaired in any definite and absolute way, and continued diligent in reading and writing almost to the last day of his life. His sufferings, often severe, were borne with patience and courage (he had an ample stock of both qualities), though not with that unemotional calm which would have been foreign to his Italian nature. For nearly a year before his death he lived, with his wife and daughter Christina at Frome Selwood in Somerset; but finally he returned to London, and died at No. 166 Albany Street, Regent’s Park, on 26 April 1854, firm-minded and placid, and glad to be

released, in the presence of all his family. His young cousin, Teodorico Petrocola-Rossetti, was also there. He lies buried in Highgate Cemetery.

Gabriele Rossetti was a man of energetic and lively temperament, of warm affections, sensitive to slight or rebuff, and well capable of repelling it, devoted to his family and home, full of good-nature and good-humour, a fervent patriot, honourable and aboveboard in all his dealings, and as pleasant and inspiring company as one could wish to meet. Though sensitive as above stated, he was not in the least quarrelsome, and never began a conflict about either literary or personal matters: this disposition he transmitted to his son Dante Gabriel. For some years after settling in London he went a good deal into society, and was welcomed in several houses. This had diminished at the date of my earliest reminiscences, and soon it had wholly ceased. He could tell an amusing story most capitally—I have hardly known his equal at that—with good dramatic “take-off”; and, though his ordinary speech was, to the best of my judgment, very pure Italian, he could readily throw himself back, when he liked, into the Neapolitan dialect, or the Abruzzese, which is not a little provincial.<sup>1</sup> He always spoke Italian in the family, never English; and his children from the earliest years, as well as his wife, answered in Italian. Apart from domestic simplicity or sportiveness, his conversation was always high-minded, implying a solid standard of public and private virtue: nothing about it mean or sly or worldly, or tampering with principle. There was indeed a certain tinge of self-opinion or self-applause in his temperament; he rather liked “to ride the high horse” (as I have heard my brother phrase

<sup>1</sup> I possess two good books showing the dialect of Vasto, sent to me by the courtesy of their authors: the *Vocabolario dell' Uso Abruzzese*, by Gennaro Finamore, and the *Fujj' Ammesche*, by Luigi Anelli. The latter volume is a series of sonnets, which appear to me highly excellent of their popular kind. When I say that the Vastese words “Fujj' Ammesche” represent the Italian words “Foglie Miste,” my English reader will be able to judge whether Vastese is a pure or impure form of Italian.

always retained, however, a perceptible tone of the *altra* *poestas*. Rossetti was a splendid declaimer or reciter with perfect elocution. He put his heart into whatsoever he did. His MSS. are models of fine and minute penmanship, and show enormous pains in the way of revision and recasting.

He was an ardent lover of liberty, in thought and in the constitution of society. In religion he was mainly a freethinker, strongly anti-papal and anti-sacerdotal, but not inclined, in a Protestant country, to abjure the faith of his fathers. He never attended any place of worship. Spoken of his free-thinking, he had the deepest respect for the moral and spiritual aspects of the Christian religion, and in his later years might almost be termed an unsectarian and unogmatic Christian. As a freethinker, he was naturally exempt from popular superstitions--did not believe in ghosts, second sight, etc.; and the same statement holds good of our mother. In this respect Dante Gabriel, as soon as his mind grew a little formed, differed from his parents; being quite willing to entertain, in any given case, the question whether a ghost or demon had made his appearance or not, and having indeed a decided bias towards suspecting that he had. One point, however, of popular superstition, or I should rather say of superstitious habit, my father had not discarded. A fancy existed in the Abruzzi (I dare say it still exists) that, if one steps over a child seated or lying on the ground, the child's growth would be arrested; and I have more than once seen my father divert his path to avoid stepping over any one of us. In politics he belonged more to the party of constitutional monarchy than to that of republicanism, but welcomed

A3



anything that told for freedom. He always advocated the *unity* of Italy, long before that aspiration was considered a very practical one; indeed, I have seen him described, on good authority, as the *first* apostle of unity, but am not clear that this is strictly accurate.

In estimating Rossetti's work as a national or patriotic poet, and his general attitude of mind in matters of politics, or of government in State and Church, we should remember the conditions (already referred to) under which his life had been passed. He was born under the feudal and despotic system of the Neapolitan Bourbons; his youth witnessed the more open-minded but still despotic Napoleonic rule; the Bourbon restoration brought on a constitution sworn to by the sovereign, who soon after perjured himself in suppressing it; lifelong exile ensued to Rossetti and other constitutionalists. Then he lived through many abortive insurrections against the temporal and ecclesiastical dominators of Italy; through the brilliant promise and the retrogression of Pope Pius IX. (whom at first he acclaimed with unmeasured fervour); through the high deeds, glorious prospects, and dolorous collapse, of the revolutionary years 1848-49, and through the fuliginous beginnings of the Neapolitan King Bomba; followed by a genuinely liberal government in Piedmont under Victor Emmanuel and Cavour, by the *coup d'état* of Napoleon III., and by general stagnancy of political thought and act throughout Europe. He died five years before 1859, which produced the alliance between France and Piedmont, the expulsion of the Austrians from Lombardy, and the commencement of the unification of Italy. When he died in 1854 the outlook seemed extremely dark; yet heart and hope did not abate in him. The latest letter of his which I have seen published was written in September or October 1853, and contains this passage, equally strong-spirited and prophetic—

"The *Arpa Evangelica* . . . ought to find free circulation through all Italy. I do not say the like of three other unpublished volumes, which all seethe with love of country and hatred for tyrants. These

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await a better time—which will come, be very sure of it. The present fatal period will pass, and serve to whet the universal desire. . . . Let us look to the future. Our tribulations, dear madam, will not finish very soon, but finish they will at last. Reason is awakened in all Europe, although her enemies are strong. We shall pass various years in this state of degradation; then we shall rise up. I assuredly shall not see it, for day by day, nay hour by hour; I expect the much-longed-for death; but *you* will see it."

In person Gabriele Rossetti was rather below the middle height, and full in flesh till his health failed; with a fine brow; a marked prominent nose and large nostrils, dark-speaking eyes, pleasant mouth, engaging smile, and genuine laugh. He indulged in gesticulation, not to any great extent, but of course more than an Englishman. His hands were rather small—not a little spoiled by a life-long habit of munching his nails. As to other personal habits, I may mention first snuff-taking without any smoking; and a hearty appetite while health lasted, with more of vegetable diet than Englishmen use. In his later years teeth and palate had failed, and his viands "tasted like hay." Fermented liquors he only touched seldom and sparingly. He had liked the English beer, but had to leave it off altogether in 1836, to avoid recurring attacks of gout. In fact, he liked most things English—the national and individual liberty, the constitution, the people and their moral tone, though the British heaven of social Toryism was far from being to his taste. He certainly preferred the English nation, on the whole, to the French, and had a kind of prepossession against Frenchwomen, which he pushed to a humorous over-plus in speech—saying for instance that if a Frenchwoman and himself were to be the sole tenants of an otherwise uninhabited island, the human race on that island would decidedly not be prolonged into a second generation. My father also took very kindly to the English coal fires, and was an adept in keeping them up; he would jocularly speak of "buying his climate at the coal-merchant's." In all my earlier years I used frequently to see my father come home in the dusk rather fagged with his

round of teaching, and after dining he would lie down flat on the hearthrug close by the fire, and fall asleep for an hour or two, snoring vigorously. Beside him would stand up our old familiar tabby cat, poised on her haunches, and holding on by the fore-claws inserted into the fender-wires, warming her furry front. Her attitude (I have never seen any feline imitation of it) was peculiar, somewhat in the shape of a capital Y—"the cat making the Y" was my father's phrase for this performance. She was the mother of a numerous progeny; one of her daughters—also long an inmate of our house—was a black-and-white cat named Zoe by my elder sister Maria, who had a fancy for anything Greekish; but Zoe never made a Y.

Rossetti had produced a tolerable amount of verse in Italy, also the descriptive account (which passes under the name of Cavalier Finati) of the Naples Museum; but all his more solid and voluminous writing was done after he had settled in London. The principal works are as follows: 1826—*Dante, Commedia* (the *Inferno* alone was published), with a Commentary aiming to show that the poem is chiefly political and anti-papal in its inner meaning. A great deal of controversy was excited at the time by this work, and by others which succeeded it. 1832—*Lo Spirito Antipapale che produsse la Riforma* (*The Anti-Papal Spirit which produced the Reformation*), following up and extending the same line of thought. An English translation was also published. 1833—*Iddio e l'Uomo, Salterio* (*God and Man, a Psalter*), poems. The two last-named books have the honour of being in the Pontifical *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, edition 1838, and perhaps others are there now. 1840—*Il Mistero dell'Amor Platonico del Medio Evo* (*The Mysterious Platonic Love of the Middle Ages*), five volumes; a book of daring and elaborately ingenious speculation, enforcing the analogy of many illustrious writers, as forming a secret society of anti-Catholic thought, with the doctrines of Gnosticism and Freemasonry (Rossetti was himself a Freemason). This book was printed and prepared for publication, but was withheld

(partly at the instance of Mr. Frere) as likely to be accounted rash and subversive. 1842—*La Beatrice di Dante*, containing that Dante's Beatrice was a symbolic personage, not a real woman. 1846—*Il Veggente in Solitudine* (*The Seer in Solitude*), a poem of patriotic aim, in a discursive and prosodical form, embodying a good deal of autobiography and of earlier material. It circulated largely though clandestinely in Italy, and a medal of Rossetti was struck there in commemoration. 1847—*Versi* (miscellaneous poems). 1848—*L'Arpa Evangelica* (*The Evangelic Harp*), religious poems.

As regards my father's writings on Dante and other authors—the outcome of an immense amount of miscellaneous, often curious and abstruse, reading—I may be allowed to say that I regard his views and arguments as cogent, without being convincing. They affect one more in beginning than in ending it. He certainly made some mistakes, and urged some details to a wiredrawn or fanatical extreme, and in especial he was not sufficiently master of the happy instinct when to leave off, so that his latest and most important book, the *Mistero dell' Amor Platónico*, becomes cumbrous with subsidiary matter. In his poems also he was over-fond of amplifying and loading, being too unwilling to leave a composition as it stood; though he wrote with great mastery and ease, and a brilliant command of metre, rhythm, and melody. Many snatches of his verse are forcible and moving in a high degree, and rouse a contagious enthusiasm. He has left in MS. a versified account of his life, written between 1846 and 1851. It is not long, nor yet very short, and is about the completest as well as the most authentic account that exists of his career. I should like to translate it some day, and publish it in England.

To give some idea of Rossetti's poetry, I cannot do better than extract here one of the remarks upon it made by the pre-eminent Italian poet of our own day, Giosuè Carducci, in a selection from Rossetti which he edited in 1861. Carducci, after contrasting him with some of his contemporary writers, terms him—

"The singer who, notwithstanding his defects, conforms the most to the poetic taste and the harmonic faculty of the Italian people. No plethora of murky inventions, and of recondite and strange forms, and of versified disquisitions, and of nebulous swathings ; but a daring and serene fancy, impetus of emotion, plenteousness and sometimes superabundance of colouring, facility, harmony, melody, make these poems truly Italian, make them singable. Singable, I say ; and I know that this praise may, in the opinion of some, amount to blame, now that for the most part singable poetry is of the worst."

Not in Vasto alone, but in all Italy, Rossetti's reputation as a patriotic poet stood high—more perhaps among the men of action and the ardent youth than among the critical assessors of literary merit. A proposal was made to transfer his remains to a sepulchre in Italy, as an act of national recognition. My mother having demurred, an inscription was set up to him in the Florentine cloister of Santa Croce, which counts as the Italian Walhalla or Westminster Abbey. In Vasto the centenary of his birth was celebrated in 1883 with much evidence of enthusiasm. The principal Piazza (del Pesce, as first entitled) and the Communal Theatre are named after him ; and it has long been proposed—though perhaps rather half-heartedly—to erect his statue, and to purchase for the town the house in a part of which he was born—an ancient and somewhat stately-looking though plain edifice, battered by time and neglect. I am tempted to extract here a few of the many eulogiums pronounced upon Rossetti at the centenary—not unconscious, however, of the caution with which any utterances on such an occasion are to be received.

From the speech of Professor Francesco di Rosso : --

"He then conceived that love of his oppressed country, and that indignation against the oppressors, which were to be (as I may say) the religion of his entire life, and were to dictate to him the most beautiful strains, and make him the Tyrtæus of the battles of the Italian liberty, unity, and independence, the poet sacred to Italy and Europe labouring under tyranny, under political and religious re-action."

From the speech of the sub-prefect Cavalier Domenico Fabretti:—

"Many were the public-spirited poets of Italy: but none conjectured the cycle of her evolution, shadowed forth its agents, designed its forms, with the forecasting precision, the exact intuition, of your Rossetti. He was not only the sweet poet of the Arcadian style, was not only the studious and elegant verse-writer, was not only the fervent patriot, but was the seer of the Italian re-aring."

From a pamphlet by signor Adelfo Mayo,<sup>1</sup> addressed to the workmen of Vasto:—

"You, citizens and workmen, will deserve well of your country if you will imitate the domestic and civil virtues of that great nation, if you strive with all your efforts to preserve intact the sacred deposit of the Italian liberties under the sceptre of the Kings of Savoy, and if you also co-operate, as best you may, in raising a worthy monument to one who, conferring honour upon our city, has honoured likewise the Abruzzi and the entire peninsula."

In England very little has got into print showing Gabriel Rossetti "in his habit as he lived." There are, however, several recent books which give an idea of him in his later years, and in each instance the idea is a true one as far as it goes. Mr. William Bell Scott's *Autobiographical Notes* (1892) contain in the following passage, relating to the close of 1847 or beginning of 1848:—

"I entered the small front parlour or dining-room of the house [50 Charlotte Street], and found an old gentleman sitting by the fire in a great chair, the table drawn close to his chair, with a thick manuscript book open before him, and the largest snuff-box I ever saw beside it conveniently open. He had a black cap on his head furnished with a great peak or shade for the eyes, so that I saw his face only partially. . . . The old gentleman signed to a chair for

<sup>1</sup> With this fine-minded and cultivated gentleman, well meriting his high position in the Vastese community, I have had the pleasure of keeping up some correspondence ever since the date of the centenary meeting.

my sitting down, and explained that his son was now painting in the studio he and a young friend had taken together : this young friend's name was Holman Hunt.<sup>1</sup> . . . The old gentleman's pronunciation of English was very Italian ; and, though I did not know that, both of them—he and his daughter [Christina]—were probably at that moment writing poetry of some sort, and might wish me far enough, I left very soon."

The second portrait of my father, and a very good one it is, is traced by Mr. Frederic George Stephens in his monograph named *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (1894) : it shows a memory highly retentive of characterizing details :—

"As might be expected of one possessing so many accomplishments, and whose career had been marked by so much courage, the Professor was a man of striking character and aspect ; so that, when I was introduced to him in 1848 [some few months perhaps after Mr. Scott's first visit to our house], and his grand climacteric was past, and (as with most Italians) a life of studies told upon him heavily, I could not but be struck with the noble energy of his face, and by the high culture his expression attested, while a sort of eager, almost passionate resolution seemed to glow in all he said and did. To a youngster, such as I was then, he seemed much older than his years ; and, while seated reading at a table with two candles behind him, and (because his sight was failing) with a wide shade over his eyes, he looked a very Rembrandt come to life. The light was reflected from a manuscript placed close to his face, and, in the shadow which covered them, made distinct all the fineness and vigour of his sharply moulded features. It was half lost upon his somewhat shrunken figure wrapped in a student's dressing-gown, and shone fully upon the lean, bony, and delicate

<sup>1</sup> According to Mr. Scott, this was his first call at No. 50 Charlotte Street, and the interview took place "about Christmas 1847-48." I consider that the correct date of his first call was in December 1847 or January 1848. But Mr. Scott's memory must have been entirely wrong as to his then hearing about the studio shared by Holman Hunt and Dante Rossetti, for there was no such sharing of any studio until late in August 1848, and the words put into our father's mouth, if spoken at all, must have been spoken later than "about Christmas 1847-48." *Ex uno disce multos.*

hands in which he held the paper. He looked like an old and somewhat imperative prophet, and his voice had a slightly ringing, speaking to his sons and their visitors."

I am not sure that the word "rigorous" would here convey quite the right impression. My father's address in such cases was clear and emphatic, and as if no dissent were expected to ensue; but it was not marked by anything hard or brusque.

Good-natured and indulgent though he in fact was, and animated with the most resolute desire to do his very best for the present and future of his children, our love nevertheless was chiefly concentrated upon our mother—and never did our mother deserve it better. This preference may have been rather less marked in my elder sister Maria than with the rest of us. Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori was born in London, 42 Broad Street, Golden Square (the same street in which William Blake had been born forty-three years before), on 27 April 1800. Thus she was seventeen years younger than her husband. Of her parents I shall say something in my next Section. She was brought up with a view to becoming a governess; and at the early age of sixteen took charge of her first pupil, the adopted daughter of Thomas Dickens, of Vale Lodge, Leatherhead, Surrey. I have heard my mother say that in this house she used to find from time to time John Shelley, the brother of the poet. He was a very handsome youth, aged then some thirteen or fourteen, and all mention of the name of that world-abandoned rebel, the versifying atheist, was strictly forbidden. He came to my mother passed into the families of Mr. Justice Bolling (whom she highly respected), and of Sir Patrick Macgregor. One of her pupils, Miss Georgina Macgregor, became the second godmother of my sister, Christina Georgina. A brother of Sir Patrick, a Colonel, fell not a little in love with Maria Polidori. Whether this highly estimable gentleman (as she always represented him to me) would have made up his mind to "proposing for the governess" I am unable to say; but anyhow he was forestalled by the Neapolitan refusal.



*By D. G. Rossetti.*

GABRIELE ROSSETTI.

1853.





Rossotti, who rapidly won the damsel's heart, and was promptly accepted. The marriage proved a truly happy one, spite of narrow circumstances, and the harassing troubles of my father's long illness and decay. On his side there was deep unwavering affection, and the most absolute esteem and confidence; on hers, affection and confidence in no less measure, and a cordial admiration for his uncommon gifts and attainments.

Mrs. Rossotti was well bred and well educated, a constant reader, full of clear perception and sound sense on a variety of subjects, and perfectly qualified to hold her own in society, a combination of abnormal modesty of self-estimate free, however, from the silliness or insincerity of self-disparagement, and of retirement and repose of character, and of devotion to home duties, kept her back. The idea of "making an impression" never appeared to present itself to her mind—still less the idea of out-shining or rivalling any one else. I doubt whether in the whole course of my life I once saw her go out to an ordinary "evening party." Perfect simplicity of thought, speech, and manner, characterized her always; I venture to think that it was dignity under another name. For conscientiousness, veracity, the keeping confidences inviolate, the utter absence of censoriousness or tittle-tattle, she was an absolute model: all this came so natural to her that it passed almost unnoticed, or seemed a matter of course. Day and night she attended to the household—doing needlework, teaching her girls, keeping things in order, etc. In all the central years of her life there was only one servant in the house. She was deeply but unpretentiously religious, a member of the Church of England, very constant in church-attendance. In my earlier years she might be regarded as belonging rather to the "Evangelical" branch of the Church, but later on her associations grew to be of the "high church" kind. This only made a difference of habitude, not of essentials. She took a reasonable interest in matters of politics, her sympathies being on the Liberal side. She wrote correctly in prose, and some few times even in verse; but

without having, at any time of her life, any notion of doing aught for publication. I have heard that in youth she was considered rather a "quiz" (as the phrase then ran), or a person with a sharp eye for the ridiculous in others. Of this I myself remember few symptoms or none; but certainly she knew a pretender or a humbug when she saw one, and could express her perception by clear word of mouth. With all the reserve of her character, her total want of forwardness, her mostly unspoken scorn of semblances which have not realities behind them, there was nothing about her of the merely stolid or negative; her feelings were warm, and even her temper might have been less unruffled than it was, but for a life-long practice of moderating self-control. She was just, liberal, kind, forgiving, steadfast. A son who has any evil to say of his mother might feel embarrassed until he had managed to say it mildly: I am spared any such embarrassment. To sum up—she was one of the most womanly of women.

My mother once said—it may have been towards 1872 or 1873: "I always had a passion for intellect, and my wish was that my husband should be distinguished for intellect, and my children too. I have had my wish [and this she might well say in reference to her elder son and her younger daughter, not to bring the remaining two into question]; and I now wish that there were a little less intellect in the family, so as to allow for a little more common sense." I have always set store by that utterance of my mother, as equally sound and characteristic.

Frances Rossetti was of an ordinary female middle height, or a trifle less than that,<sup>1</sup> with a full-sized head, fresh complexion, features more than commonly regular, shapely

<sup>1</sup> Miss Hall Caine, in her pleasant article *A Child's Recollections of Rossetti*, in the *New Review* for September 1894, describes my mother as "very little." This is a mistake. Miss Caine only saw my mother in the early part of 1882, when the latter was nearly eighty-two years of age. Her figure had then fallen in, and she looked short; but the statement in my text is the correct one.

Madonna-like eyelids, and an air of innate composure. Her general aspect was English, not Italian. Her eyes were grey, her hair in youth abundant and pretty, worn then in long ringlets, of a full-tinted brown. It altered colour but little, even in her extreme old age ; and she always looked to me--and I believe to others---some five or six years younger than she was. Her voice was extremely clear and uniform, excellent for reading. There is a good likeness of her in one of Sir John Millais's pictures--the *Departure of the Crusaders*, painted towards 1856.

After the definite failure of my father's health, or from about 1844 until his death in 1854, the chief support of the family devolved upon my mother--the eldest child, Maria, being in 1844 only seventeen years of age. My mother made great and most laudable efforts--going out to teach French and Italian (both of which she knew and spoke perfectly well) and other things, and afterwards holding precarious day-schools--at No. 38 Arlington Street, Mornington Crescent (our residence for a year or two beginning in 1851), and at Frome Selwood. The schools produced no income of any account ; and my mother's small expectations (from the property left by her maternal grandfather), and then her small capital, had to be trenched upon. After her return however from Frome, in 1854, it no longer became necessary for her to exert herself ; she continued living with me and my two sisters, and in 1876 removed with Christina to another house, 30 Torrington Square. In her later years her hearing was imperfect, though by no means gone, and her general strength abated considerably. Her mind remained always clear, but necessarily less strong with the inroads of age. She died, rather of gradual decline than of anything else, on 8 April 1886, the very day which completed four years after the death of Dante Gabriel. Had she lived a few more days, she would have been eighty-six years of age. She rests by her husband's side in Highgate Cemetery.

I have observed that my mother "wrote correctly in prose, and some few times even in verse." It has lately been my

melancholy task to hunt through drawers, pigeon-holes, etc., in the house (30 Torrington Square) occupied by my sister Christina—of memory gracious to many—up to the date of her death, 29 December 1894. I came upon a little red writing-case, given by Dante Rossetti to our mother in 1849; in the writing-case were these verses of her composition. They are dated 1876, the year when my sister Maria Francesca died; after Dante's death in 1882 a final couplet was added. To me the lines, recording a succession of family losses, are pathetic; they come from a heart full of affection. Perhaps the reader will think it ridiculous that I should print them; at worst, the ridicule will apply to me alone, and not to the writer, who in youth and age kept all such things very much to herself.

"No longer I hear the welcome sound  
Of Father's foot upon the ground;  
No longer see the loving face  
Of Mother beam with kindly grace;  
No longer hear 'how I rejoice'  
At sight of me, from Sister's voice;<sup>1</sup>  
No more from Husband loved will be a  
'Cara Francesca, moglie mia';  
And from dear Daughter sore I miss  
'My dearest Dodo,'<sup>2</sup> and her kiss:—  
I never more shall hear him speak,  
The dearly loved who called me 'Tique.'<sup>3</sup>"

### III.

#### RELATIVES.

FRANCES ROSSETTI was the daughter of Gaetano Polidori, and of Anna Maria Polidori, *née* Pierce.

My maternal great-grandfathers were both born an immense time ago; Agostino Ansaldo Polidori in 1714, and William Pierce in 1736: strange to think of. Even my maternal

<sup>1</sup> This was Margaret, who died in 1867.

<sup>2</sup> A pet name much used by Maria for her mother.

<sup>3</sup> Dante Gabriel was addicted to calling his mother, in her later years, "the Antique," or simply "Antique," shortened sometimes into "Tique."

grandfather dates as far back as 1704, and my grandmother as far back as 1769. The year 1714 witnessed the accession of George I. to the British throne; 1736, the death of Prince Eugene; 1764, the death of Hogarth; 1769, the publication of the first *Letter of Junius*.

The name Polidori is of course Greek, not Italian; but of any Greek ancestry which there may possibly have been I know nothing. The Polidori family, so far as I ever heard of it, was Tuscan, the profession of medicine being customary from father to son; authorship was also frequent in the race, at any rate in the later generations. Agostino Ansaldo, author of two poems, *Tobias* and *Osteology* (the latter has been privately printed), was a Doctor settled at Bientina near Pisa: here was born his son Gaetano. There was also a brother of Agostino, named Francesco. He produced a poem entitled *Losario* (privately printed), more or less in the vein of Ariosto. Gaetano was intended for the law, which he studied in the University of Pisa. In 1785, however, he deserted the law, and, on the recommendation of the Abate Passini, became secretary to the famous tragedian Conte Alfieri, with whom he stayed at Brisach, Colmar, and Paris. Naturally he saw, along with Alfieri, the Countess of Albany, whose husband, "the Young Pretender," was then still living. Polidori was in Paris at the taking of the Bastille in July 1789; and a little anecdote which he relates of that day may deserve reproduction here:—

"I was passing by the Palais Royal while the populace were running to assault the fortress; and, having encountered a highly-powdered wig-maker, with a rusty sword raised aloft, I, not expecting any such thing, and hardly conscious of the act, had the sword handed over to me, as he cried aloud—'*Prenez, citoyen, combattez pour la patrie.*' I had no fancy for such an enterprise; so, finding myself sword in hand, I at once cast about for some way to get rid of it; and, bettering my instruction from the man of powder, I stuck it into the hand of the first unarmed person I met; and, repeating, '*Prenez, citoyen, combattez pour la patrie,*' I passed on and returned home."

Polidori (as he intimates) had no taste for political convulsions, and little for politics of any sort. Almost immediately afterwards Alfieri got put out at finding that on a single occasion his secretary was not at home when summoned, and the Count wrote him a note, asking him "to change his style, or else his dwelling." Polidori, one of the least pliable of mortals, closed at once with the second alternative, and determined to clear out of France, and repair to England to teach Italian. He asked for and readily obtained three letters of introduction from Alfieri and the Countess of Albany. These were addressed to Mrs. Cosway, the painter, Captain Masseria, a relative of Napoleon, and the famous Corsican General De' Paoli. The last remained up to his death on intimate terms with Polidori, and left him a mourning ring, which I now possess. In 1791 Alfieri, then in France, wished to get Polidori back as his secretary; but the latter declined with thanks, preferring conservative England very much to revolutionary France.

In February 1793 Polidori married Miss Anna Maria Pierce, who had acted as a governess. He taught Italian for a great number of years, retiring in 1836, after having made a fair moderate competence. He then lived for a while wholly in Buckinghamshire—Holmer Green, near Little Missenden, in a house which he had purchased years before for personal and family convenience—but in 1839 he returned to London, Park Village East, Regent's Park. There he died of apoplexy in December 1853, aged eighty-nine.

My anecdote about the wig-maker and the sword is taken from a little narrative which Polidori wrote, as an appendix to one of his privately printed books; for he kept a printing-press in Park Village East, and there he produced, with some aid from practical hands, several volumes of his own works, and a few others. Dante Rossetti's boyish poem *Sir Hugh the Heron*, and Christina's *Verses*, were among these—printed respectively in 1843 and 1847. Another was the poem by Erasmo di Valvasone, *L'Angeleida*; with passages extracted by Polidori from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, presumably founded

more or less upon this Italian poem. The personal narrative above mentioned relates chiefly to Alfieri, and contains several particulars of some interest. I give here a few of the general observations upon him :—

"Curious and strange was the character of that singular man : proud as Milton's Satan, and more choleric than Homer's Achilles. He esteemed himself far beyond his real worth, and very few were the poets or men of letters for whom he had any regard. He was proud of his reddish hair, which he always wore studiously curled and tended ; of his fine and speckless apparel, and especially of his uniform as a captain in the Piedmontese Infantry, which he donned for more solemn occasions ; of his pure gold buckles for shoes and breeches, as then worn ; of his handsome English horses, of which, counting together saddle and carriage horses, he had sixteen ; and of his fine and elegant phaëton, which he generally drove four-in-hand, and went in pomp, taking the air in city and high-road. Yet, amid many defects, Count Alfieri had some good qualities : that of paying his debts most punctually, of limiting his outlay so that at the end of the year some money remained over, rather than he indebted for a penny, and of being just, when justice was clear to him. As I never had to dispute with him, in four years that I was in his house, save with the reason on my side, and, whenever we had disputed, he, upon recognizing that he was in the wrong, had confessed it and taken the blame to himself, I esteemed and loved him [various anecdotes had been previously given in the narrative, amply confirming this statement as to disputes between Alfieri and his secretary]. . . . In 1789 began the French Revolution, in which he exulted, and I saw him leap with joy upon the ruins of the Bastille."

It is matter of notoriety, however, that after a while Alfieri entirely altered his view of French affairs, and became a Gallophobist of prime virulence.

Polidori was a man of good stature and very vigorous build ; his health was strong, and his faculties not seriously impaired by age. He liked almost any occupation—writing, reading, cabinet-work (he produced many pretty boxes, tables, etc., in wood-mosaic, after the Florentine manner),



and miscellaneous country work. He was a man of the most sturdy and independent character, a sworn enemy to pretence and frivolity of all sorts; for instance, he would not allow any of his daughters to learn dancing. He always remained nominally a Roman-catholic, but without taking any part in religious observances of whatsoever kind. For his son-in-law Rossetti he had a sincere liking, and owned his great superiority to himself as a poet. But the divergence between them was frequently marked in little things: Polidori solid, unbending, somewhat dogged; Rossetti not any less earnest in essentials, but vivacious, facile, with more grace of manner and feeling, and comparatively mercurial. As a grandfather Polidori was both kind and tolerant, and was looked up to by us with much warmth of regard.

Gaetano Polidori had all the habits and likings of a literary man, and was more decidedly bookish than my father. Like the latter, he was a member of the Academy of the Arcadi, and bore the high-sounding designation of "Fileremo Etrusco." I possess his Arcadian diploma, a curious document. He wrote a large number of things in prose and verse, both published, privately printed, and unprinted. His first work was a poem, *L'Infedeltà Punita* (*Faithlessness Punished*). Among the others are—*Novelle Morali* (*Moral Tales*); *Grammaire de la Langue Italienne*; *A Dictionary* in three volumes, Italian with French and English, French with Italian and English, and English with Italian and French—a very handy little book, and no doubt no small labour to its compiler; *Translation of all Milton's Poems*; *Translation of Lucan's Pharsalia*, with a sequel of his own; *Tragedie e Drammi*. Unprinted is a *Life of Boccaccio*, written in English, which my grandfather knew and spoke well. This MS. I possess; likewise an Italian *Life of General de' Paoli*, up to his return to Corsica during the French Revolution—a work which, considering Polidori's intimacy with his hero, might be of some worth.

As I have already said, the wife of Gaetano Polidori was Anna Maria Pierce; and I will now give some few particulars

about the Pierce family, which is, as will be perceived, the only source from which Dante Gabriel Rossetti had any English blood in his veins.

I know nothing of the Pierces beyond Richard Pierce, my great-great-grandfather, who was a schoolmaster in Burlington Gardens, London. He had a son, William, a writing-master, who maintained himself from the age of sixteen onwards, married twice, and had ten children. William Pierce (I referred to this at the beginning of the present Section) was born as far back as 1736; and it would appear that the vocation of a writing-master must in his prime have been far more lucrative than it is at present, for he made a very comfortable competence (the chief source of whatever money there has been in the family since his time), and "kept his carriage." Possibly his first marriage (which seems to have been into a grade somewhat above his own) had to do with this result. He was always represented to me as a curiously well-preserved specimen of "the old school"; formal, precise, upright, rather formidable to a younger generation, yet kind too in his way. Among his grandchildren he had a special predilection for my mother; though like a good British Tory as he was, he thought it "very odd" that, after his daughter Anna Maria had married one foreigner, his grand-daughter Frances should marry another foreigner. It looked like flying in the face of the blessed shades of a Chatham, Wolfe, Nelson, and George III., and truckling to the far from blessed shades of a Voltaire, a Mirabeau, and a Bonaparte, not to speak of the Pope of Rome. Mr. Pierce had in fact a strong feeling against marriages with foreigners, as his favourite sister had made a marriage of this kind which proved very unhappy. He died in 1829, aged ninety-three, shortly before my birth; and after him I was named William. His ten children, other than Mrs. Polidori, shall not concern us here; except to say that one of his sons, Frederick, became a Brigadier-General, and was highly esteemed, I believe, in the Army of India. I will also observe in passing that, through the first wife of William Pierce, Jane Arrow, and a brother and sister of hers,

the present generation of Rossettis are some sort of cousins to that distinguished cleric, the Rev. J. E. Kempe, of St. James's Church, London, and also to the late Mrs. Eliza Anna Bray, whose first husband was a son of the painter Thomas Stothard. She published a *Life of Stothard*, various romances, tales of Devonshire life, an *Autobiography*, and other works. My uncle Henry Polydore once took the pains of drawing out a scanty pedigree of the Pierce and Arrow families; and I find in it, as connected by marriage, the surnames Wrather, Hunter, Maunsell, Le Mésurier, Jump, Lester, Porter, Hutchins, Mose, Kitchener, Austin, Cooper, Sandrock, and Brown (nothing to do with Madox Brown). These surnames—except Wrather, Austin, and Brown—represent nothing to my memory. Of the Austins I have some direct or collateral knowledge. There was a Bishop Austin in the West Indies, and an Austin Governor of Honduras; and in 1887 at San Remo I met a very pleasant young lady, Miss Burrows (now Mrs. Martin), who informed me that she was some connexion of mine—I believe through the Austin family.

As I have said, my great-grandfather, William Pierce, married a Miss Jane Arrow. My own knowledge of the Arrow family is of the scantiest; but I find it mentioned in Mrs. Bray's *Autobiography* that James Arrow, the father of Jane, belonged to an old race, much damaged in the cause of Charles I. He had a small landed estate in Berkshire, and married an Irish lady, Elizabeth Jerdan, "related to the Whartons." She died at the age of ninety-nine!

To return to Anna Maria Pierce, Mrs. Polidori, whom, as she lived on to May 1853, I remember perfectly well. Before my recollection begins she had already become an invalid, owing to an internal complaint, and she never left her bedroom, and not often her bed. Her youngest daughter, Eliza Harriet, was her constant and devoted attendant, sacrificing for this purpose all the pleasures and interests of youth. Mrs. Polidori was a fine old lady, with very correct features, and an air which, in spite of her age and infirmity, was

comely as well as reverend. Her bed-room had to me all the dignity of a presence-chamber, which I entered at sparse intervals with a certain awe. She was, like several others of her race, a high Tory, and an earnest member of the Church of England; and the arrangement made at her marriage was that any daughters should be brought up in that Church, while any sons should belong to the Roman communion. It comes apposite to say here that in the Rossetti family the understanding was different, and all the children were trained in their mother's faith. Mrs. Polidori had attained her eighty-fourth year at the date of her death. The only other member of her generation of the Pierce family whom I knew was her elder sister Harriet, who, though unmarried, was always in my time styled Mrs. Pierce, and we children were admonished to term her "Granny." After passing many years as governess in the family of the Earl of Yarborough, she spent the evening of her life in nice apartments in London, which she made a model of spick-and-span comfort, not unmixed with elegance. I have just now said that she was unmarried; but there ran a rumour, not totally uncorroborated, that Lord Yarborough had in fact wedded her without publicity. He had become a widower in 1813, and lived on to 1846. This rumour I of course in no sort of way avouch. "Granny" was the liberal purveyor of many a serviceable household-present to my mother, her favourite niece. She inherited all the faultless precision and imposing decorum of her father, and was the most nitid little old lady you could easily pick out in London. She died in 1849—the first time that I looked upon the visible face of death.

The Polidoris had a family of four daughters and four sons—one of the latter dying in infancy. In my notes to my brother's letters sufficient details will be given about three of these—Charlotte Lydia, Philip Robert, and Henry Francis (the latter modified his surname into Polydore). There remain the eldest daughter, Maria Margaret, and the youngest (whom I have just now mentioned), Eliza Harriet. Maria

Margaret—or Margaret, as she was always called—was in her youth a governess, but retired pretty early, and lived with her family, and finally in my house, 166 Albany Street, where she died in 1867. She was much affected with nervous tremor, and troubled by hysterical fits, in which she would fall into peals of long-continued quasi-laughter, which rang over the house—more like the vocal gymnastics of a laughing hyena than like anything else I know. No other symptom of the hyena appeared about my aunt, who, apart from a touchy temper, was a good old soul, much addicted to “daily service” twice a day in church. The youngest daughter, Eliza Harriet, had always a housekeeping managing turn, without any literary leanings. In 1854, the year succeeding her mother’s death, she determined to make her knowledge of nursing useful to the nation, and went out with Miss Nightingale to the Crimean expedition, being then about forty-five years of age. To her disappointment no actual nursing was assigned to her, but she had the supervision of the hired nurses, and the management of bedding-stores etc., at the Barrack Hospital, Scutari, and rendered excellent service, which was recognized by the bestowal of a Turkish medal. I remember that after her return to England some case relating to the nursing transactions came into a London police-court, and she had to give evidence; and we were amused at finding her, in the newspaper reports, designated as “Miss Polly Dory.” The Crimean affair was about the only “adventure” of her long life. She died in London in 1893, aged nearly eighty-four. Eliza was the last of the English Polidoris; some of the name are still in Florence.

Only one other Polidori has to be accounted for in my narrative—Dr. John William Polidori, who lives faintly in some memories as the travelling physician of the famous Lord Byron. He was born in London on 7 September 1795, educated at some Catholic schools and at the Benedictine Ampleforth College near York, and took his degree as M.D. in Edinburgh at the singularly youthful age of nineteen. He was only twenty when, on the recommendation of Sir Henry

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Halford, he became the travelling physician of Byron, who on 24 April 1816 left England for the last time. They went along the Rhine to Geneva, where Polidori made acquaintance also with Shelley and his two companions, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (the second Mrs. Shelley) and Clare Clairmont. Polidori, who had poetical and literary ambitions of his own, took too much upon him to suit Byron for long; so on 16 September the two parted company, and the young Doctor travelled on alone to Pisa, and then returned to England. He became one of the physicians in the Norwich Hospital; but soon gave up medicine, partly because he would not have been allowed to practise in London before completing twenty-six years of age, and he began studying in London for the Bar. It has been said that in Norwich Miss Harriet Martineau was somewhat in love with him; and this would not be unlikely, as Polidori—apart from his intellectual gifts, which were by no means so flimsy as some people seem now to suppose—was a noticeably fine young man, of striking feature and presence. In August 1821 the end came in a melancholy way: he committed suicide with poison—having, through losses in gambling, incurred a debt of honour which he had no present means of clearing off. A coroner's jury was summoned; the jurors took, probably through good-nature towards the family, no steps for eliciting requisite evidence, and returned a verdict of "Died by the visitation of God." His death was a grievous blow to his father, all whose leading hopes centred in this son. Gaetano Polidori, to the end of his long life, a lapse of thirty-two years, was never equal to hearing any mention of him, and we children of a younger generation were strictly warned not to name him, however casually, in our grandfather's presence.

John Polidori published two volumes of verse: *Ximenes, a Tragedy, and Other Poems*, 1819; and *The Fall of the Angels*, 1821. It may at once be admitted that his poetry was not good. Two prose tales are much better—*Ernestus Berchtold*, and *The Vampyre*, both published in 1819. *The Vampyre* has continually been misascribed to Byron,

who in reality wrote the mere beginning of another tale (quite different in its incidents) named likewise *The Vampire*. Polidori left some other writings, both published and unpublished. The latter include a diary, partly detailed and partly mere jottings, of his sojourn with Byron and Shelley, and his subsequent tour. It was commissioned by Murray for publication at no less a price than £525, and contains some particulars of substantial interest.<sup>1</sup>

I have now finished all that I need say about the relatives of Dante Rossetti on the mother's side. The only relative on our father's side whom we have personally known—with some others I have corresponded—was Teodorico (or properly Teodoro) Pietrocola, who adopted the compound surname of Pietrocola-Rossetti. He was a Vastese, and studied medicine to some extent. In 1851, being then about twenty-four years of age, he came to London, hoping to find an opening of some kind; but found nothing except semi-starvation, which he bore with a cheerful constancy touching to witness. In 1856 or thereabouts he returned to Italy, practised for a moderate while medicine as a Homœopathist, married a Scotch lady (originally Miss Steele, now Mrs. Cole, an amiable, accomplished, and admirable woman), and, with her co-operation, devoted himself to preaching evangelical Christianity, somewhat of the Vaudois type, in Florence and elsewhere. He died very suddenly in 1883, just as he was giving out a hymn or text to his small congregation. He published a few things—among others, a biography of my father, a translation of *Alice in Wonderland*, and one of Christina Rossetti's poem, *Goblin-Market*. A man of more native unselfish kindness, of stricter morals, or of nicer conscientiousness, never breathed.

Since writing the above, I have observed in the book of Mr. W. G. Collingwood, *The Life and Work of John Ruskin*, a reference to Pietrocola-Rossetti which is of so much interest

<sup>1</sup> On the details about Shelley in this diary I wrote a few years ago, and delivered to the Shelley Society, a lecture which has not as yet been printed.

to me, and in itself so noticeable, that I extract it here; it relates to the year 1882:—

"Miss [Francesca] Alexander . . . was as friendly, not only in society but in spiritual things, with the worthy village priest as with T. P. Rossetti, the leader of the Protestant 'Brethren,' whom she called her pastor—a cousin of the artist, and in his way no less remarkable a man. It is hardly too much to say that he did, for evangelical religion in Italy, what Gabriel Rossetti did for poetical art in England: he showed the path to sincerity and simplicity. And Mr. Ruskin, who had been driven away from Protestantism by the Waldensians at Turin [this refers to an incident in the year 1858], and had wandered through many realms of doubt, and voyaged through strange seas of thought alone, found harbour at last with the disciple of a modern evangelist, the frequenter of the poor little meeting-house of outcast Italian Protestants."

If this statement is literally accurate, it would appear that the latest development of Mr. Ruskin's religious opinions was mainly influenced by Miss Alexander, who was not a little influenced by Pietrocola-Rossetti: a matter worth remembering for many a day to come.

I have often reflected how utterly different this cousin of mine was from the ordinary English notion of a Southern Italian. My father also was very different from that notion: my grandfather, a Central Italian, quite the reverse of it. Peace be with the honoured and honourable memory of all three.

The Rossetti family in Vasto became extinct while I was composing this Memoir: the latest survivor was Vincenzo Rossetti, who died, aged forty, on 11 November 1894. "With him," so runs a *billet de faire part* which was sent to me, "was lost the last germ of so glorious a stem in Italy." I presume, but cannot say for certain, that in the female line the race of Nicola and Maria Francesca Rossetti may still subsist.

The reader may have observed, in the course of my family narrative, several instances of longevity in the races of Arrow, Pierce, and Polidori. I have under my eye a list



of nine persons, among whom the lowest age was eighty-three, the highest ninety-nine—average eighty-eight. Nothing of the sort appears in the Rossetti race, though my father attained a not inconsiderable age—seventy-one. It may also be noted that in the three lines from which Dante Rossetti came—Polidori, Pierce, and Rossetti—the work of tuition held a very large place. Hence perchance he inherited a certain readiness at linguistics, and at seeing literary matters from a literary point of view; but there was little or nothing in him of the man born to teach by ordinary teaching methods.

#### IV.

##### *CHILDHOOD.*

My mother, marrying on 10 April 1826, had four children—there were never any more—in four successive years: Maria Francesca, born on 17 February 1827; Gabriel Charles Dante, 12 May 1828; William Michael, 25 September 1829; and Christina Georgina, 5 December 1830. The famous Surgeon and Physician, Dr. Loeck—afterwards Sir William Loeck, the Queen's accoucheur—ushered, I believe, all of us into the world; for our father—though a man of thrift, and in personal expenses heedfully sparing—grudged no cost needed for the well-being of his household. To Gabriel Charles Dante I shall here generally apply the name "Dante," which he adopted as if it had stood first in order; in his own family, however, he was invariably termed Gabriel or, by our sister Maria, "Gubby," a pet name which other members of the household did not affect.

Our house, No. 38 Charlotte Street, was a fairly neat but decidedly small one: it is smaller inside than it looks viewed from outside. I can remember a little about it, but not much. Towards 1836 the family had outgrown it, and removed to No. 50 in the same street—a larger but still far indeed from being a spacious dwelling. This house is now the office of a Registrar of births, deaths, and marriages; and, singularly

enough, when I had to record in 1876 the death of my sister Maria, I found that the place for doing this was the very house in which she had so long resided. Soon after Gabriele Rossetti settled in Charlotte Street it began to go down in character, and at times it became the extreme reverse of "respectable." Dante Rossetti in his early childhood was a pleasing spirited-looking boy, with bright eyes, auburn hair, and fresh complexion. He remembered in after-years nothing distinctly earlier than this: That there used to be a Punch and Judy show which came at frequent intervals to perform just before our house, but for the delectation of our opposite neighbours, so that he himself only saw the back of the show. This was not at all what he wanted; so he motioned to go out into the street, and turn round and see the front of the Punch and Judy (there was no Dog Toby in those distant days), but was wofully disconcerted at being told that such a proceeding would be *infra dig*, and not to be condoned. Dante shared with Maria the ascendancy over his two juniors: but Maria, in these opening years, was not easily to be superseded—being of a very enthusiastic temperament and lively parts; and indeed she always remained the best of the four at what we call acquired knowledge. In her fifth year she could read anything in either English or Italian, and read she did with tireless persistency. Our early years were passed wholly at home in London, with occasional visits to our grandparents at Holmer Green, our Aunts Margaret and Eliza, and our Uncle Philip, being continuously there as well. Our daily walks were with our mother in and about Regent's Park, which was opened to the public much towards the date of my birth. I can still recollect how palatial I used to consider the frontage of the Terraces facing the Park, and how our mother would explain to us which of the columns or pilasters was Ionic, which Corinthian, and so on. The Colosseum, a big Exhibition building pulled down towards 1870, was then in existence, and was occasionally visited by us. It comprised a Camera Obscura, in which we viewed with wonder the groups of people disporting them-

selves in the Park. Primrose Hill was ascended every now and then. It led immediately on into fields (how different from now!) which brought one into the rural village of Hampstead, to which our father escorted us at rare intervals. Railways were just beginning not far from Regent's Park; to see the puffs of their steam as the trains rolled onward appeared little short of magic.

Two of my childish reminiscences of my brother relate to animals. Some one gave him a dormouse, which he named "Dwaunging," and, on the approach of winter, he shut it up in a drawer to hibernate. In its long sleep he looked at it from time to time, but was careful not to disturb it; and his glee was proportionate when the little creature revived in the spring. Later on there was a hedgehog, to whom Dante's conduct was not equally correct. The hedgehog was wont to trot about on the table in our dining and sitting room, or "parlour" as we mostly termed it (the drawing-room was little used, save by our father in his literary work, or occasionally with a pupil); and one day my brother insisted on leaving upon the table some beer for his prickly favourite. The latter freely partook of the beverage, and his unsteady gait evinced the effects of it. Our mother forbade the repetition of any such experiments; and I think Dante himself had no wish to recur to them, for at no period of his life did he relish the sight of anything repellent or degrading. One of my brother's first books was *Peter Parley's Natural History*, which he enjoyed, both text and cuts. We went pretty often to the Zoological Gardens, then a very recent foundation, and would run shrieking through its tunnel, to rouse the echo. The animals were at that date much fewer than now, yet still numerous—their housing very inferior. There was a striated monkey, whose designation was explained to us (I have not seen any such animal of late years); also a singsing antelope, of whom my father would say (in English), "Sing, sing, antelope; antelope, sing, sing; but he never sang." Armadilloes, and a sloth walking with his head downwards, were among our favourites—not to speak of screaming parrots,

bears, lions, tigers, and elephants. A collared peccary gave Christina a vicious bite, which came to nothing. No wombat figured at that early date; but several dogs used to be there, more or less domestic, which were tethered in a rather dejected and yell-abounding file. They were afterwards abolished, on the ground that such a treatment of them was not far remote from cruelty.

Another amusement, as Dante progressed in childhood, was the Adelaide Gallery, close to St. Martin's Church, now occupied by Gatti's Restaurant. It was a semi-scientific entertainment, exhibiting *inter alia* fearsome microscopic enlargements of the infusoria in a few drops of water. The Adelaide Gallery was succeeded by the Polytechnic Institution in Regent Street, with a more varied programme of like kind—diving-bell, electric shocks, dissolving views, chemical demonstrations, etc. This also is now gone, the present Polytechnic being quite a different sort of establishment. The Soho Bazaar, and more especially the Pantheon Bazaar in Oxford Street (now Gilbey's liquor stores), were often our resort. The Pantheon exhibited many pictures from time to time, including Haydon's *Raising of Lazarus*. Astley's Riding Circus, with dramatic entertainments (such as *Mazeppa*), we saw once or twice, but in childhood we hardly at all entered a regular theatre. To pay for going to the Italian Opera (the building near Charing Cross, now gone) was what we could not afford. Occasionally, however, the great singer Lablache, whom my father had known in Naples, would give us a ticket for that house, and we enjoyed the performance vastly. My recollections carry me back to the first (or may-be the second) London season of the celebrated Madame Julia Grisi, whom I saw in the *Gazza Ladra*. The appearance of her husband Mario was a matter of some years later on. I remember also the first season of Madlle Rachel, who was acting Chimène in the *Cid* of Corneille. There was likewise a ballet, *The Daughter of the Danube*, with various "fiends" in it. This hit our fancy uncommonly, and we made at home some kind of pretence at "the Blue Demon"

and other of its characters in 1838. My first (and for years it must have remained my sole) pantomime is also a lively reminiscence. There was a race run by jockeys on pigs, and each touch of the whip raised a shower of sparks out of the porcine steeds, to my uncontrollable laughter and delight. My brother must have been with me, but I forget his demeanour.

Beyond an opera or a concert at rare intervals, we heard little music as children; except that our father, with his rich voice and fine declamation, would at times, unaccompanied, strike up a stave of some glorious chant of the French revolutionary epoch—

"La Victoire en chantant nous ouvre la barrière"—

or (sung to the same spirit-stirring air)—

"Romain, lève les yeux. Là fut le Capitol,"<sup>1</sup>

or the Marseillaise. Another customary song of his was a popular and rather long grotesque tirade about a Jewish wedding, *Baruccabà*, from which he sang several snatches. Our mother also would frequently play on the pianoforte, for our delectation, *The Battle of Prague*, with the "groans of the wounded," and other less lugubrious details. She had an agreeable voice for singing; but it had received no sort of cultivation, as singing was, like dancing, one of the worldly vanities which my grandfather discountenanced. In my first

<sup>1</sup> This Lyric must belong to the year 1798, when the French army entered Rome, and set up a short-lived Republic; perhaps it is now a curiosity. I can recall the opening lines—being all, I think, that my father sang:—

"Romain, lève les yeux. Là fut le Capitol:  
Ce pont fut le pont de Coelés:  
La Brutus immola sa race:  
Et César dans cette autre place  
Fut poignardé par Cassius.  
Rome, la Liberté l'appelle;  
Sache vaincre ou sache périr:  
Un Romain doit vivre pour elle,  
Pour elle un Romain doit mourir."

years I often heard her sing these lines, and the tune still lingers with me:—

"The sun sets by night and the stars shun the day,  
But glory remains when their lights fade away:  
Begin, ye tormentors, your threats are in vain,  
For the sons of Alnomuk shall never complain.

"Remember the arrows we shot from our bow,  
Remember the chiefs by our hatchets laid low:  
Now, the flames rising fast, we exult in our pain,  
For the sons of Alnomuk shall never complain."

Where do these mediocre lines come from? My mother (it seems to me) associated them with the story of Guatimozin and the Spaniards under Cortes, but that does not look correct.

I hardly think that I ever saw my father touch a pack of playing cards; he played pretty often at chess. My mother would at times take part in a family game without any stakes. Upon us children nothing was more strongly impressed than a horror of gambling, which had led to the death of Dr. John Polidori: but we were allowed to play at simple games; Patience, and Beggar my Neighbour, and (what I never hear of now) The Duchess of Rutland's Whim. The last I associated in my mind with the notion of arithmetical subtraction, as contrasted with addition, which the other two games might be held to represent. Later on there came Whist, and the Italian game of *Tre Sette*. We identified ourselves in a sort of way with the four suits of cards; and clubs were thus made the appurtenance of Maria, hearts of Dante, diamonds of Christina, and spades of myself. I may here say that the dislike to the idea of gambling clung to us through life; and neither Dante nor any other of us ever played for money, in any sense worth naming. Besides cards, a rocking-horse, a spinning-top, a tectotum, ball, ninepins, blindman's buff, and puss-in-the-corner, used to amuse us—hardly anything else in the way of games. Even marbles we never rightly learned, nor efficient kite-flying, still less anything to be called athletics. As to mental games, we were much addicted to what is called

"animal, vegetable, or mineral"; and there must occasionally have been some "capping verses," but this (which seems odd under the circumstances) was quite infrequent.

Of events in the opening years of Dante Rossetti I find none to record; unless it be that, at the age of five, he suddenly became weak on his legs, and, after the celebrated surgeon Sir Benjamin Brodie had been consulted, he had to wear splints for a longish while—say three or four months. I can recollect the look of him, carried, or afterwards hobbling, upstairs. One day he thought he would try how he could do without the splints; he did very well, and the affair was at an end. He was a sprightly little fellow, and liked to play a trick or two. One trick he played more than once was walking in the street in a huddled-up attitude, as if he were crippled or almost hunchbacked. When a passenger looked at him sympathetically, the limbs suddenly straightened, and perhaps an impish laugh accompanied the change of form. In our unluxurious household he was regarded as rather "dainty" in his diet; inclined to eat such things as he liked, and doing without those he disliked. For beer he had a marked distaste; there was no wine going to speak of, so he stuck to water. Meat also he would scarcely touch until turned of eight years.

I believe the first attempt at drawing made by the future painter of *Beata Beatrix* was on this wise. At the age of about four he stationed himself in the passage leading to the street-door, and with a pencil of our father's began drawing his rocking-horse; later on in his childhood and boyhood he seldom made any attempt at drawing from any real object, but only "out of his own head." A milkman came in at the moment, and was not a little surprised: "I saw a baby making a picture," he said to the servant. I have here mentioned "the age of about four," because that is the age which my brother himself named to me one day in April 1872 when we were talking over our earliest reminiscences. I still possess a drawing by him of the rocking-horse, on which our mother has marked the date 1834, when he was at least five

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years of age. I could believe this to be that very first drawing of all, were it not that the performance comes so near to being pretty tolerably good that I find some difficulty in conceiving that he had never before taken pencil in hand.

Having once begun, Dante never dropped this notion of drawing—of handling a pencil or a brush; and I cannot remember any date at which it was not understood in the family that "Gabriel meant to be a painter." He, and also I, were incessantly buying sheets of slight engravings of actors and actresses in costume—"Skelt's Theatrical Characters" was the name of one leading series of them. I do not think any such engravings are now produced, which seems strange in this period of dramatic activity. There was a good-natured little stationer named Hardy, perhaps in Clipstone Street, from whom we bought these things; and another named Marks, in Great Titchfield Street, who was a trifle less accommodating, and on one occasion nonplussed us both by insisting that we should ask for the required "characters" by the number printed on the sheet, and not by the title of the play or the personage. The quantity of these figures which Dante and I coloured is marvellous to reflect upon—he in chief, but I was a good second; our sisters counted for little. We also "tinselled" the figures, but this was comparatively rare. Now and then we made some attempt at acting a play with such personages on a toy-stage; but, as none of us had the least manual or mechanical dexterity, this came to nothing. I seem to recollect *The Miller and his Men* and *Der Freischütz*. In colouring our taste was all for bright hues—red, blue, yellow, etc. Neither of us had the least of a colourist's sympathy for fused, subdued, or mottled tints.

In those days another amusement was current, which has, I fancy, died out entirely. It might well be revived. "Magic Shadows" was the name of it. One bought full-sized sheets of paper, on which heads, figures, or groups, were rudely printed, in coarse outline, and with numerous half-formless splotches



of black. One had to cut out a figure etc. along its outline, and to cut out also the splotches of black; and then one held up the figure between a candle and the wall, so that the shadow of the unexcised portions was cast on to the wall. This shadow looked surprisingly neat and expressive in comparison with the original aspect of the printed figures. We all—but principally myself—enjoyed this ocular amusement, and practised it diligently for various years.

## V.

## ACQUAINTANCES IN CHILDHOOD.

MR. HALL CAINE has cited from one of Dante Rossetti's letters the phrase, "Our household was all of Italian, not English, environment." This is wholly correct.

The only English family that we used to see pretty frequently was that of Mr. Cipriani Potter, the Pianist, and Principal of the Royal Academy of Music. He was one of my godfathers, and had children of much the same age as ourselves; an excellent undersized man, with a somewhat saturnine expressive face, an abundance of shrewd sense, and a bantering habit of talk. Mr. Charles Lyell, though intimate with my father, was seldom in London. There was also Mr. Thomas Keightley, the historian, and author of *The Fairy Mythology*—a book which formed one of the leading delights of our childhood. He likewise was in London only occasionally—a scholarly, shortsighted Irishman, of a high sense of honour, rather easily nettled now and again. He was a great believer in my father's views concerning Dante. At a much later date, towards 1849, Mr. Keightley settled in a suburb of London; and his nephew and adopted son, Mr. Alfred Chaworth Lyster, became, and still remains, one of my most affectionate friends. Two of the families in which my father taught Italian—those of Mr. Swynfen Jervis, and of Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid—had a particular regard for him, and on some high occasions we children were inside their

doors. Mr. Jervis, a relative of Lord St. Vincent, took some minor part in verse-writing and Shakespearian comment. He was father of Mrs. George Henry Lewes, and I remember her well before her marriage, but never saw her afterwards; her unfortunate story shall not here be touched upon. To Sir Isaac Goldsmid, one of the wealthiest Hebrew stockbrokers in London, I may record my obligation, which proved to be a life-long one. He it was who, when my father, in failing health and waning employment, was looking out for some career into which I could be introduced, spoke a word in season to one of his colleagues on the Council of the London University, Mr. John Wood, then Chairman of the Board of Excise—and Mr. Wood lost no time in giving me employment there which, though temporary at first starting, lasted in fact from February 1845 to August 1894. These seem to be about the only English people whom I need mention in this connexion, allowing besides for the English family of an Anglo-Italian music-master, Signor Rovedino. This family, like that of Mr. Potter, comprised children of our own age. With Mrs. Rovedino resided an aunt, whom I mention for the sake of her sounding old Saxon name, Miss Waltheof, which was always pronounced Walthew.

We knew in childhood a perfect specimen of the "Poor Relation," who used to call upon our mother at regular intervals for purposes easily surmisable. She was named Miss Sarah Brown—a middle-aged spinster tending to the elderly, of that order of faculty which is termed "weak-minded." At a very early age we became, in some casual way, familiar with Charles Lamb's excellent little essay called *Poor Relations*, containing the words (as near as I remember them):—

"There is one person more embarrassing than a male Poor Relation, and that is a female Poor Relation; no woman dresses below her station from caprice."

I used to ponder these words in regard to Sarah Brown, and to think, "Is it or is it not true that no woman dresses below her station from caprice?"

If English acquaintances were at a minimum with us, Italian acquaintances were at a maximum. It seems hardly an exaggeration to say that every Italian staying in or passing through London, of a Liberal mode of political opinion, sought out my father, to make or renew acquaintance with him; not to speak of numerous relays of tatterdemalions, who came principally or solely for alms. If they made the Masonic knock at the door, or a Masonic digital sign on entering, they were immediately relieved, as an act of obligation on the part of my father as a Freemason; and many were relieved who had no claim of that particular kind. There were two terms which I have heard my father apply—how often!—to persons of this class: "*un cercatore*" was an applicant or beggar, "*un seccatore*" was an intrusive person, or bore. Others, to whom these designations did not relate (though some of these also were manifest *seccatori*, and perhaps on occasion *cercatori* as well), would come evening after evening, and almost all evenings, to our house—in various instances, for months or years together. My father, as the offspring of a blacksmith in a country town, was not entitled to have any caste-prejudices, and in fact he had none. To be an Italian was a passport to his good-will; and, whether the Italian was a nobleman, a professional gentleman, a small musical hanger-on, a macaroni-man, or a mere waif and stray churned by the pitiless sea of expatriation, he equally welcomed him, if only he were an honest soul, and not a *spia* (spy)—the latter being a class of men much rumoured of among the Italian refugees and Londoners, and abhorred with a loathing indignation. Hardly an organ-man or plaster-cast vendor passed our street-door without being interrogated by my father, "*Di che paese siete?*" ("What part of Italy do you come from?") The plaster-cast vendor is seen no more in London streets, but the organ-man remains. The natives of the Sunny South who frequented our house seemed all to be indifferent—singularly indifferent, in British eyes—to any form of social entertainment; what they came for was talk—chiefly on political topics, mingled at moments with a little literature,

and constantly with a liberal sprinkling of my father's poems, which were received with sonorous eulogy, founded at least as much on political or national as on literary considerations. Gabriele Rossetti's noble declamation, taken along with his subject-matter, was indeed enough to carry any sympathizer away on the wave and whirl of excitement. I seldom heard him read any of his prose-writings on such occasions. His auditors hardly appeared to have any fleshly appetites. Such a thing as a solid supper was never in question, neither did they ever propose to smoke. They would come into our small sitting-room, greet the "Signora Francesca" and their host, and sit down, as the chance offered, amid the whole family, adult and semi-infantine. A cup or two of tea or of coffee, with a slice of bread and butter, was all the provender wont to be forthcoming.

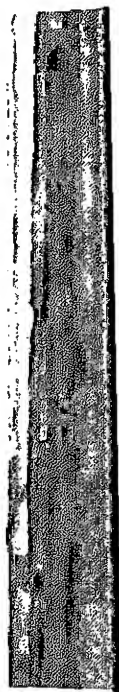
It would be difficult to give an idea of the atmosphere of thought and feeling in which Dante Rossetti grew to boyhood and to youth, unless I were to say something about the foreign visitors. I shall endeavour to be reasonably brief. Some he remembered a little, but I, his junior, scarcely or not at all. Such were Angeloni, a literary purist,<sup>1</sup> who became blind in his last years; General Michele Carrascosa, who was my second godfather; the famous *prima donna* Giuditta Pasta; Guido Sorelli, who maligned in a book the character of Italian women, and was gibbeted by my father in a sonnet; Dragonetti, a leading violoncellist at the Italian opera; Petroni, compiler of a dictionary. The celebrated author Ugo Foscolo was barely known to my father in London; well known was the not less celebrated violinist Paganini. There was a Conte Farò, who took, I believe, to coal-dealing. "Farò" means in Italian "I will do"; and my father (possibly

<sup>1</sup> Purism in the use of the Italian language was a great controversy among Italians in all those years. The purists insisted upon recurring to the standard of literary diction, mainly the Tuscan of the fourteenth century, to the exclusion of everything modern, provincial, or imported from abroad. Gabriele Rossetti cared little for such niceties, but was willing to write much as he thought and spoke. Polidori was stricter, yet not a purist.

without any reason beyond the purport of the name) used to call him "*Farò, farò, e non farò mai niente*" ("I will do, I will do, and never will he do anything"). One curious character, fearfully addicted to drawing the long bow, was named the Marchese Moscati, who actually persuaded the very eminent physician, Dr. Elliotson, that Moscati had a double stomach, and was a ruminating animal. Elliotson introduced him to Rossetti, and was (I may take this opportunity of saying) our accustomed family doctor, resolutely refusing—for he was a most kind and generous man—to accept any fees for his valuable advice. Thackeray dedicated *Pendennis* to him. After a while my father left Moscati to ruminate by himself, and they became avowed enemies.

Among Italians well remembered by me, some are mentioned in my Notes to Dante Rossetti's letters:—Filippo Pistrucci (I recollect also, though faintly, his brother Benedetto the eminent medallist, who designed our "George-and-the-Dragon" coinage); Sangiovanni, the clever modeller in clay, the most picturesque figure of all, who had, I believe, "knifed" somebody in early youth, and had later on (chiefly after the suppression of the Neapolitan constitution in 1821) had many a romantic adventure in the kingdom, as captain of a band for the suppression of brigandage, which bore a partly politico-reactionary character; the Cavalier Mortara; Baron Calfapietra. Other intimates in our early childhood were—Janer (he subsequently called himself Janer-Nardini), a Tuscan, scholarly and courteous, keen in politics, and of a very biting tongue; Cicoloni, a teacher of Italian, of high character in all respects, who took up Rossetti's work at some times when the latter was laid aside, and especially during his very severe illness in 1843; Foresti, who had been in China; Sarti, the plaster-cast vendor; De' Marsi, a teacher; Ferrari, an aged musician whom blindness had overtaken; Sir Michael Costa, the musician and conductor, and his brother Raffaele, both of whom we saw occasionally; Count Carlo Pepoli, a good-looking, cultivated Bolognese of high honour and ancient family, regarded in our retired household as rather a dandy—he had been addressed in a

striking poetical epistle by the great poet Leopardi, and eventually an English lady of some fortune "proposed to him," and he married her, returned to Italy when liberal politics prevailed there, and died a Senator of the realm; Rolandi, the bookseller, a very worthy man of small stature; Count Giuseppe Ricciardi, a South Neapolitan, an ardent patriot of the revolutionary-republican type. I remember seeing once or twice in our house a handsome stately lady, rather advanced in years, who called herself, I think, Ida Saint Elme. She was the daughter of a Hungarian nobleman, Leopold de Tolstoy, had led an agitated and far from correct life, and was authoress of the *Mémoires d'une Contemporaine*, published in Paris in 1827. Two old friends passed some days in my father's house, vaguely remembered by me—Dr. Curci, and Smargiassi, the latter a Vastese, and a landscape-painter of considerable name in the Neapolitan kingdom. Curci had quite a passionate attachment to my father, and I believe visited England for the express purpose of seeing him once again. Later on were Cornaro, a descendant (and I think I was told the sole remaining descendant) of the great Venetian family—a noticeable man, in early middle age, with long nose and reddish hair—he was said to be an inveterate gambler, and he died accidentally by drowning; Parodi, a dancing-master, who gave us lessons in dancing, in return for Italian lessons imparted to his son by my father—he was a man not wanting in good sense, but uninstructed in a marked degree, and spoke the most curious lingo that I ever heard—French, German, and English, grafted on to his native Italian; Aspa, a vigorous Sicilian, pianoforte-tuner in Broadwood's house; Gallenga, the political and miscellaneous writer, as expert in the English as in the Italian tongue; Dr. Maroncelli, brother of a well-known exile who suffered a rigid imprisonment; the musician Sperati; Signora Monti (afterwards Monti-Baraldi), to whom some of Rossetti's latest letters were written. Dr. Maroncelli gave him some medical advice towards 1843; and later on another doctor, Gilioli, seemed to have some partial success in treating his eyesight.



Of one of these Italians, Sangiovanni, I will say a few words further, as he and his had more to do with our early family life than any of the others; Pistrucci came next. Sangiovanni was a tall gaunt man, with an air of having gone through a deal of wearing work, aged about fifty-two when I first remember him. It is rather a curious fact that two Spanish painters, having to depict St. Joseph, adopted a type of visage not at all unlike Sangiovanni's, but in each instance (especially the second) less strained and rugged. I refer to the pictures in our National Gallery, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, by Velasquez, and *The Holy Family*, by Murillo. Of school knowledge Sangiovanni had little, but plenty of intelligence; of religious belief (I should say) nothing; but in this respect he was on a par with a large proportion of his London compatriots. My father once narrated to him the story of the Patriarch Joseph, from the Book of Genesis, which came perfectly new to him, and interested him extremely. In 1833 he went over to America, on business proper to Achille Murat, to look after an estate and its slave-labourers. In the United States he saw an Anglo-American young woman whom he liked; he proposed for her, and brought her back to England as his wife. She became the mother of an ailing boy, Guglielmo. Sangiovanni, as a husband, was not unkind in his way, but had all the jealousy (perfectly gratuitous in this instance) and the dominance of a Southern Italian; and his wife was almost a prisoner in her dingy tenement, Nassau Street, Marylebone, where her spouse carried on his clay-modelling art. My mother, with some of us children, often looked in upon her solitude, and held her in deserved esteem. After some years she came to understand (I know not how) that Sangiovanni was already a married man, having a wife still living in Italy. This was, I suppose, true; and not less true that Sangiovanni had heard nothing of his first wife for many years, and had genuinely believed her to be no more. About the same time our Mrs. Sangiovanni got to know something about the Mormons; so one day she vanished with her son to Mormon-

land, and was never again traced. This may have been in 1846. Sangiovanni, after much agitated inquiry, resumed his ordinary work, and he died at Brighton in 1853.

Other names and reminiscences crowd upon me as I write. There was an odd personage, Albera, whom we considered not entirely sane. He was a great believer in one of the professing Dauphins of France, Louis XVII.—I think this one was the so-called Naundorf—and he insisted upon taking my father to see him, and believe in him too. My father saw him, but did not believe in him; though he allowed that Naundorf looked very like a Bourbon,<sup>1</sup> and had a daughter resembling Marie Antoinette. After a while Naundorf took to a sort of religious revelation, as well as to Gallic royalty, and my father, regarding him as a decided impostor, visited him no more. Then came a little snuffy senile Frenchman, the Comte de Neubourg, who was, I suppose, a Legitimist or Carlist. If his linen was not spotless, his manners were exquisitely polite. He had a mania for puns; and, when my father was conversing on some subject with his usual energetic zest, the Comte would at times both embarrass and exasperate him by interjecting something which, on reflection, proved to have no *raison d'être* beyond punning. Another singular person was the "Babylonish Princess" (introduced into our house by Cavalier Mortara), "Maria Theresa Asmar, daughter of Emir Abdallah Asmar," who published her Memoirs in two volumes in 1844. She was a small, very dark woman, of middle age and subdued manners, and decidedly plain. A Vastese named Rulli appeared in our house towards 1842, and made some pretence at bringing Dante Rossetti on in his artistic studies. I believe his instruction was limited to propounding to the youth, for copying, a drawing or engraving of an architectonic ram's

<sup>1</sup> This question of Naundorf, or of other persons who claimed to be Louis XVII., has of late acquired added importance, as it seems to be established, by the investigation ordered by the French Government, that the remains which were produced and medically inspected in 1795 as being those of the deceased Louis XVII. cannot really have been his.



head. Rulli appeared to us an unmeaning and not easily intelligible sort of character; he had something in him, however, for he died in a battle for Italian liberation. An Avvocato Teodorani adopted, and even wrote or lectured on, some of Rossetti's ideas concerning Dante and other Italian poets; and a cultivated gentleman, De' Filippi, saw a good deal of his closing years. A native of the Kingdom of Naples was generally to be known (apart from dialect or physiognomy) by his addressing my father as "Don Gabriele"—for that mode still subsists from the old days of the Spanish occupation. To other Italians my father was "Signor Rossetti," or (if on a formal footing, which was not wont to last long) "Signor Professore."

The determined character of some of these men may be illustrated by a passage from a letter written by Gabriele Rossetti in April 1851. I can hardly have failed to see the Galanti here mentioned, but I do not remember his person.

"Hither had fled from Naples, after the infamous treason of 15 May 1848, a man of great talent, the Avvocato Giacinto Galanti, who piqued himself on a spirit of prophecy. At that time our national affairs were flourishing; but he foresaw disasters which, since then, have come but too true. One evening he called to read me a writing of his entitled *The Three Years, 1848* (it was just in June of that year), 1849, and 1850. The first of these three years he defined as a Year of Roses and Thorns (and you will take note that the thorns had not yet begun); the second, Year all Thorns; and the third, Year of Death. And such, haplessly, they all turned out. He arraigned the Roman Popedom as the principal cause of all the reverses which he foresaw; and Pius IX. was, at that date, still enacting the comedy which he afterwards turned into a tragedy. On hearing that writing I was staggered; and yet, not being able then to give credence to it, I smiled incredulously, and, shaking my head, I called Galanti a bird of ill omen and a visionary. He rose incensed, and exclaimed: 'You will see whether I speak the truth, and you will confess it; but not to me, for I will not await the direful time that is coming upon us.' Saying this, he departed, returned to his house, not far from mine, and cut his throat. This terrible event produced the deepest impression on me; and soon

afterwards began our disasters. The days of Novara, Verona, and Mantua, ensued; and then the flight of the Impius who is called Pius, and so to the roses succeeded the thorns. Of the other two years I do not speak; you know what *they* were."

Towards the close of my father's life various protestantizing Italians, most of them ex-Catholic priests, got about him, and worked the anti-papal side of his opinions and writings. They started a review called the *Ico di Savonarola*. We did not relish them much, though we thought Crespi and Di Menna (the latter a very feeble-minded personage) honest in their views. There were also Ferretti and Mapei—the last little to our taste. I cannot recollect that we ever saw Gavazzi, the admired pulpit orator, but we certainly did see Dr. Achilli—whose character came much bespattered out of his action against Cardinal Newman for libel—a heavy beetle-browed man, who looked fit for most things evil.

I have not yet named the two foremost London-dwelling Italians of my boyhood, Mazzini and Panizzi. That great man, Mazzini, was naturally well known to my father, and highly esteemed by him—a feeling which Mazzini reciprocated. They dissented however, to some extent, as to what should be regarded as practical aims to work for, and practical means of working. Mazzini was, of course, for a republic, and for any number of revolutionary attempts, even though manifestly destined to present failure; whereas Rossetti was fundamentally for a unified constitutional monarchy, and for a plan of action which would preserve rather than sacrifice valuable lives. Mazzini was perhaps, of the two, the more nearly in the right; for it seems as if the result would not, without his ceaseless incitements, have been attained nearly so soon as it was. I do not think that I ever set eyes on Mazzini in my father's house; but I well remember seeing him, towards 1842, at a meeting attended by a number of poor Italians, organ-grinders and others, for whom a school was being started. He spoke after my father; and the noble, simple utterance of the word with which he began his address—"Fratelli"—still sounds upon my ear. As to Panizzi, my

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father knew him likewise in the early years ; but he understood (I believe correctly) that Panizzi was the writer of an adverse and partly sneering critique on his theories concerning Dante and other writers ; this he resented, and they met no more. Garibaldi and Saffi, who came into fame when my father was declining and withdrawn from society, he never saw ; nor do I think he saw the patriot-assassin Felice Orsini, nor Rufini, author of the admired tale *Doctor Antonio*. General Guglielmo Pepe he had known very intimately in Naples, and they kept up some correspondence to a late date, when Pepe was acting as one of the heroic defenders of Venice, 1848-49 ; but the General, so far as I am aware, never came to England.

The *bête noire* of the political Italians whom we so constantly saw was the King of the French, Louis Philippe, or Luigi Filippo, as they called him. He was more abhorred, because more powerful for good or for evil, than even the Pope, the King of Naples, or the pettier tyrants of Italy. Of course too he was regarded as a traitor, having come to the throne by a popular revolution, and then reinforced the cause of retrogression and coercion. There were also the Austrians—"Gli Austriaci"—and their hell-hound Metternich. The number of times I have heard Luigi Filippo denounced would tax the resources of the Calculating Boy. My mind's eye presents a curious group, though it seemed natural enough at the time. My father and three or four foreigners engaged in animated talk on the affairs of Europe, from the point of view of patriotic aspiration, and hope long deferred till it became almost hopeless, with frequent and fervent recitations of poetry intervening ; my mother quiet but interested, and sometimes taking her mild womanly part in the conversation ; and we four children—Maria more especially, with her dark Italian countenance and rapt eyes—drinking it all in as a sort of necessary atmosphere of the daily life, yet with our own little interests and occupations as well—reading, colouring prints, looking into illustrated books, nursing a cat, or whatever came uppermost. The talk was essentially of a serious

and often an elevated kind, but varied with any amount of lively banter, anecdote, or jest, and with those familiar reminiscences of the old days and the old country so poignantly dear to the exile's heart. As has already been partly indicated, no period passed, even in our infancy, at which we were much less capable of following a conversation in Italian than in English; and we could pick out tolerably something of French in talk, even before being set to learn the language grammatically. Italian grammar we—with the exception of Maria—hardly looked into at all as a matter of system, and English grammar was counted as pretty well explaining itself.

I regard it as more than probable that the perpetual excited and of course one-sided talk about Luigi Filippo and other political matters had something to do with the marked alienation from current politics which characterized my brother in his adolescent and adult years. He was not of a long-suffering temper, and may have thought the whole affair a considerable nuisance at times, and resolved that he at least would leave Luigi Filippo and the other potentates of Europe and their ministers, to take care of themselves.

I find some remarks in John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* (1873) which appear well worth attention; here I quote them as indicating the kind of intellectual savour which we absorbed in childhood, and which I conceive to have been eminently well adapted for ripening the faculties and keeping the feelings undebased. Mill, it will be perceived, is speaking of French (as contrasted with English) society, but what he says would apply in a general way to those Italians whom we were in the habit of seeing; though it must be allowed that several of them were commonplace persons in the fullest sense of the term. Mill says, speaking of the fifteenth year of his life—I abridge the passage here and there:—

“The greatest perhaps of the many advantages which I owed to this episode in my education was that of having breathed for a whole year the free and genial atmosphere of continental life. Having so little experience of English life, and the few people I knew being mostly such as had public objects, of a large and

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personally disinterested kind, at heart, I was ignorant of the low moral tone of what in England is called Society; the habit of, not indeed professing, but taking for granted in every mode of implication, that conduct is of course always directed towards low and petty objects. I could not then know or estimate the difference between this manner of existence, and that of a people like the French, whose faults, if equally real, are at all events different; among whom sentiments, which by comparison at least may be called elevated, are the current coin of human intercourse, both in books and in private life; and, though often evaporating in profession, are yet kept alive in the nation at large by constant exercise, and stimulated by sympathy, so as to form a living and active part of the existence of great numbers of persons, and to be recognized and understood by all. Neither could I then appreciate the general culture of the understanding which results from the habitual exercise of the feelings, and is thus carried down into the most uneducated classes of several countries on the continent, in a degree not equalled in England among the so-called educated, except where an unusual tenderness of conscience leads to a habitual exercise of the intellect on questions of right and wrong. I even then felt, though without stating it clearly to myself, the contrast between the frank sociability and amiability of French personal intercourse, and the English mode of existence, in which everybody acts as if everybody else (with few or no exceptions) was either an enemy or a bore. In France, it is true, the bad as well as the good points, both of individual and of national character, come more to the surface, and break out more fearlessly in ordinary intercourse, than in England; but the general habit of the people is to show, as well as to expect, friendly feeling in every one towards every other, wherever there is not some positive cause for the opposite."

I will add here one word or two on the contrary side. I think that the base passion of envy is more common among Italian than among English people; likewise a certain penurious or stingy habit, which may however—among the Italians I knew in boyhood—have been chiefly due to the much greater expense of living which they found in England, beyond what they had known in Italy. To spend a pound sterling wore, in their eyes, a different aspect from what it

does in a Londoner's. As to what is commonly called "morality," those Italians (so far as I can review them now) look to me, as a class, quite up to the British level; but of course the point could not be estimated by me in boyhood, and since the close of my father's life my knowledge of Italians in England is practically a blank; and the same was the case with my brother.

## VI.

## CHILDISH BOOK-READING AND SCRIBBLING.

DANTE ROSSETTI's earliest education was conducted by our mother; little or not at all by our father, apart from the general mental incitement (and this assuredly counted for a good deal) which his conversation, his using the Italian language, and his readings of his poems, supplied. I may say in this connexion that my own education—allowing for the moderate difference of age—proceeded *pari passu* with my brother's; and that my two sisters owed *everything* in the way of early substantial instruction to our mother. To school they never went at all. Thus all four of us were constantly together in infancy and childhood. Wherever one was, there the other was—and that was almost always at home. In what I have next to say I shall aim at confining myself to Dante Gabriel, but it will be understood that what is true of him applies mainly to the other three children as well.

Of course our religious mother gave Dante some rudiments of Christian knowledge, from the Bible and the "Church Catechism," and at a suitable age took him to church. He got to know the whole Bible fairly well, and necessarily regarded it with reverence as one of the greatest and sublimest books in the world. *Job*, *Ecclesiastes*, and the *Apocalypse*, were the sections of the Scripture which, before he attained manhood and ever afterwards, he viewed with peculiar interest and homage. He must have been able to read currently, and to write with moderate neatness, soon

after completing five years of age. His early reading seems to have been all in English; although, as he spoke Italian, for ordinary household purposes, about as readily as English, and as the reading process in Italian is incomparably the easier of the two for a beginner, no reason is apparent to me why this was the case.

I lately came across two letters addressed by my father to my mother, August and September 1836, which give a clear indication as to the knowledge of Italian then possessed by Dante, in his ninth year. The first expresses some surprise at finding that Dante and his two juniors (Christina was not yet six) had perfectly understood a letter in Italian from their mother, read out to them. In his second letter, my father says that Dante and I, having received notes from Maria, chanted aloud, with great demonstrations of glee, the following stave:—

" L'amabile Maria  
Ringraziata sia  
De' due biglietti suoi  
Mandati ad ambi noi."<sup>1</sup>

This extemporized effusion must, I suppose, have been the performance of Dante Gabriel. These seem to be the first rhymes he ever concocted, and, if so, he rhymed in Italian earlier than in English. My father of course smiles over verses of such a calibre—which are, nevertheless, correct in rhyme and rhythm, and not (I should say) wrong in diction.

I think that the very first book my brother took to with strong personal zest was Shakespear's *Hamlet*—i.e., certain scenes of *Hamlet*, giving a fairly complete idea of the story, which were printed to accompany the outlines to that tragedy engraved after the then universally celebrated German artist, Retzsch. Both outlines and scenes interested him vastly at the age of five, or it may be even of four; and soon a relative (probably one of our aunts) gave him a Bowdler's Shakespear, in which he read numerous plays—and indeed

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to good-natured Maria for her two notes sent to both of us.

he read, unchecked, in un-Bowdlerised editions as well. A little incident serves to fix my memory as to dates etc. in this matter. Before I was six years of age, and therefore before the close of September 1835, I had a dangerous gastric illness; and, while I was recovering from that, Dante produced for my diversion, "out of his own head," a little series of drawn and coloured figures of the leading personages in the three parts of *Henry VI.* I need not say that these were childish performances in the most absolute sense. He can then have been at the utmost seven years and four months old, and was, I fancy, some months younger. The trilogy of *Henry VI.* was a great favourite with all of us; but, by the time when Dante was familiar with that drama, he was not less versed in several other plays of Shakespear. I might with confidence specify *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV.*, *Richard III.*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and there were others as well. Of four of these we had outline-books similar to that of *Hamlet*—the designs by Retzsch, or by a less prominent German artist, Ruhl. There were also Retzsch's famous outlines to Göthe's *Poast*. Through these, with their accompanying text in English, my brother got to know, and to admire, something of *Poast*, not very long after *Hamlet*. Here was, at any rate, a good beginning for taste in poetry. Two other books with similar outlines were *Fridolin*, translated from Schiller (which we thought feeble stuff), and the *Dragon of Rhodes*.

The next immense favourite was Walter Scott. Some relative presented a pocket-edition of *Marmion* to Dante Rossetti at a very childish age. He ramped through it, and recited whole pages at a stretch—the death of Constance, the battle and death of Marmion, etc. Fitz-Hustace was regarded as a tame and correct-minded character rousing no interest. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *The Lady of the Lake* excited fully as much delight as *Marmion*; *The Lord of the Isles* and *Rokeby* only a little less. I can still recollect that one afternoon the junior master at our first school, the younger Mr.



Paul, called at our house for some purpose, and found us all four racing and tumbling about the floor, repeating in semi-drama the Battle of Clan Alpin, from *The Lady of the Lake*. Dante was then just about nine years of age. Along with Scott's poems the *Arabian Nights* went on at a great rate; the old English translation after Galland, and not long afterwards Lane's very different version. *The Waverley Novels* ensued pretty soon after the poems—*Ivanhoe* (the prime favourite), *Kenilworth*, *Quentin Durward*, etc. It may perhaps be as well to give here the opinion which, at a mature age, Dante Rossetti entertained of Walter Scott's novels. It is expressed in a letter of October 1871, addressed to Mr. William Bell Scott:—

"I have read several of Scott's novels here, and been surprised both at their usual melodramatic absurdities of plot, and their astounding command of character in the personages by whom all these improbabilities are enacted. The novels are wonderful works, with all their faults. *Guy Mannering* and *St. Ronan's Well*—neither of which I knew before—delighted me extremely. Another I read is *The Fair Maid of Perth*; which is on a level with the Victoria drama in some respects, but, in some points of conception and vivid reality in parts, can only be compared to the greatest imaginative works existing."

These books—Shakespear, *Faust*, Scott, and the *Arabian Nights*—and, along with these, Keightley's *Fairy Mythology* (mentioned in a previous section), Monk Lewis's verse-collection *Tales of Wonder* (*Alonzo the Brave*, etc.), and the stirring ballad of *Chevy Chase*—may certainly be regarded as the staple and the *fine fleur* of what Dante Rossetti revelled in up to the close of his tenth year or thereabouts. He always discerned the difference between the "Ghost in *Hamlet*" and a ghost by Monk Lewis. Other things are present to me as well: Carleton's *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver*, Gay's *Fables*, *Pascal Bruno* (a tale translated from Dumas), Fitzgreene Halleck's short poem of *Marco Bozaris*, an in-

cident of the Greek War of Independence. Of Burns he had a kind of idea, through looking into an edition sparsely illustrated by Westall; but the dialect was a bar to his taking very kindly to the poems. Lamb's *Tales from Shakespear* he skimmed and slighted. Of directly "funny" things I remember only *John Gilpin* and some jocosities of Hood in a *Comic Annual*. Naturally, too, there were the old nursery-rhymes in infantine years, and *The Peacock at Home*; and the old Fairy-tales, such as *Puss in Boots*, *Bluebeard*, *Cinderella*, *Jack the Giant-Killer*, *Beauty and the Beast*, etc. Our mother kept us adequately supplied with books having a directly religious or didactic aim—stories about "good little boys and girls," or the alternative naughty ones, and other such matter; but she, like a sensible woman, did not tie us down to liking them, in case we happened to dislike them—which we generally did. There were some of Miss Edgeworth's stories for children, such as *Frank*; Day's *Sandford and Merton*; *The Fairchild Family*, by Mrs. Sherwood, which last we were far from relishing. The one which I recollect as best esteemed was *The Son of a Genius*, by Mrs. Hofland; a companion story was *The Daughter of a Genius*. A minute edition of *Stories from English History*, by James Mill, was very frequently in our hands, with prints—the Druids burning victims in wicker cages to their gods, Queen Margaret and the Robber, and so on.

Illustrated books and engravings were not very numerous in our house, but still in fair quantity. One that Dante and the rest of us looked at continually, beginning well nigh in infancy, was an old-fashioned little book (1700) in the Dutch language, named *Metamorphosis Naturalis*, by a painter (Goedaerdt), with coloured prints of insects and their transformations. Blank wonderment, with much of stimulating pleasure and something of repulsion, was the result. Later on, and never tired of, came *Martin and Westall's Illustrations of the Bible*; and to his last day Dante would have told you that Martin was an imaginative pictorial genius of no mean power. Afterwards some one gave him a book of

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Holmer Green some engravings after Rubens, the subjects from the story of Achilles. They met his fancy in a certain way, but he did not like their fleshy forms and florid manner. Also (belonging probably to Eliza Polidori) a book of English engravings from Raphael's Cartoons, with highly laudatory descriptions. Another of our grandfather's possessions was a fine large edition of Ariosto, with French engravings of last century. These were an endless delight to Dante, from the age of eleven or so onwards. He owned much earlier, as a present from the same relative, a little book of French or Flemish woodcut-illustrations to Bible history, dating towards 1580. They were probably artistic things of their kind, and he enjoyed their arbitrary treatment and unreasonable costumes. Among our father's books were a *Poliphili Hypnerotomachia*; Gombauld's *Endymion*, in English, with engravings, dated 1639; and a volume of pagan mythology with startling woodcuts of about the early seventeenth century—I presume it to have been the *De Naturâ Deorum* of Boccaccio. All these Dante inspected from time to time, with some gusto not unmingled with awe—each book being pronounced by our father to be a "*libro sommamente mistico*,"<sup>1</sup> according to his system of interpretation of mediæval and renaissance literature. In his opening years no prints were more frequently in Dante's hands than a series of lithographs from Roman history, the work of Filippo Pistrucci (there was also a different series, coloured allegorical designs); not very superior efforts of art, but far from being amiss in treatment of the subjects. At one time, after Dante had passed out of mere childhood, some one brought into our

<sup>1</sup> Book in the highest degree mystical.

house Pinelli's outlines from Roman history. These we admired most heartily, and I suppose with good reason. Some of Pinelli's subjects of Italian peasant and street life we knew already. Various other prints and drawings occur to my mind; but somewhere I must stop, and I stop here. Occasionally—it seems to me by no means often—he went to the National Gallery in childhood. Mr. Frederick J. Shields has recorded an interesting point that he heard from Dante Rossetti, who mentioned it to show the sound direction which, in many instances, his mother gave to his taste. On his first visit to the National Gallery—he may, I suppose, have been then just ten years of age<sup>1</sup>—he was inclined to admire the big, showy, and (to an untrained eye) somewhat telling picture by Benjamin West, *Christ healing the Sick*; but his mother, who made no pretence to technical knowledge in art, at once set him right by remarking that it was “common-place and expressionless.” What two epithets could go closer to the root of the thing?

It has often been said, by writers who know nothing very definite about the matter, that Dante Rossetti was, from childhood or early boyhood, a devoted admirer of the stupendous poet after whom he was christened.\* This is a mistake. No doubt our father's Dantesque studies saturated the household air with wafts and rumours of the mighty Alighieri; therefore the child breathed Dante (so to speak), but he did not think Dante, nor lay him to heart. On the contrary, our father's speculations and talk about Dante—which, although he highly valued the poetry as such, all took an abstruse or theoretic turn—rather alienated my brother than otherwise, and withheld him from “looking up” the Florentine, to see whether his poems were things readable, like those of Shakespear, Scott, or Göthe. With all of us children the case was the same. I question whether my

<sup>1</sup> The National Gallery, in its present building, opened to the public in April 1838. The first nucleus of the collection had previously been housed in Pall Mall, but I surmise that none of my family ever went there.

brother had ever read twenty consecutive lines of Dante until he was some fifteen or sixteen years of age; no doubt after that he rapidly made up for lost time. Our father, when writing about the *Comedia* or the *Vita Nuova*, was seen surrounded by ponderous folios in italic type, "*libri mistici*" and the like (often about alchemy, freemasonry, Brahminism, Swedenborg, the Cabbala, etc.), and filling page after page of prose, in impeccable handwriting, full of underscorings, interlineations, and cancellings. We contemplated his labours with a certain hushed feeling, which partook of respect and also of levity, but were assuredly not much tempted to take up one of his books, and see whether it would "do to read." The *Convito* was always a name of dread to us, as being the very essence of arid unreadableness. Dante Alighieri was a sort of banshee in the Charlotte Street houses; his shriek audible even to familiarity, but the message of it not scrutinized.

As to all this, a passage in my brother's Preface to his book *Dante and his Circle* ought to have prevented any misapprehension concerning the supposed constant reading of Alighieri in very childish years. He says:—

"The first associations I have are connected with my father's devoted studies, which, from his own point of view, have done so much towards the general investigation of Dante's writings. Thus, in those early days, all around me partook of the influence of the great Florentine; till, from viewing it as a natural element, I also, *growing older*, was drawn within the circle."

There was an English artist named Seymour Kirkup, domiciled in Florence. He was made a Barone of the Italian Kingdom, and must be remembered by many persons now living, as he only died towards 1879, aged ninety-two or thereabouts. He was an enthusiast for Dante, and was a profound believer in my father's scheme of Dantesque interpretation. He began corresponding with my father towards 1837, and kept this up for several years. It was in 1839 that he took a leading part in discovering the portrait of the youthful

Dante, by Giotto, in the Bargello of Florence, long lost under whitewash. He made at once a good full-sized coloured drawing of this invaluable portrait (now, sad to say, no longer in a perfectly authentic state), and sent the drawing as a present to my father; from him it came to my brother, and was only disposed of in the sale of his effects which followed his death in 1882. The receipt of this portrait probably put the mind and feelings of Dante Rossetti as much *en rapport* with the Florentine poet as any incident which had preceded it; but even so he did not take any immediate steps for acquainting himself with the poems.

My brother's first "poem"—his almost solitary drama<sup>1</sup>--was written in his own handwriting, towards the age of five. He may have been just six, rather than five, but I am not certain. It is entitled *The Slave*, and it lies before me at this moment. Why he wrote *The Slave*, or what he supposed himself to mean in writing it, is not clear to me. One can, however, form one safe inference—that his inspiration derived from seeing, *passim* in Shakespear, the words "Slave, Traitor, Villain," and what not. *The Slave* consists of three Scenes in two "Acts"; it only fills nine small pages of large writing. The writing begins by imitating print, but goes on into an ordinary (very childish) cursive hand. Probably Dante Gabriel learned how to write cursively while the drama was in course of composition. It surprises me to note that the spelling is strictly correct: the blank verse (when it occurs, for some parts are in truncated verse, or practical prose) is also correct enough—as here:—

"Ho, if thou be alive, come out and fight me!"

"Down, slave, I dare thee on! Coward, thou diest!"

"But yet I will not live to see thee thus."

This matter of versification correct in accent and number of feet, however puerile in other respects, may to some readers seem stranger than it does to me; for I cannot, with reference

<sup>1</sup> I say "*almost* solitary," because I possess another trifle in the dramatic form—a mere piece of grotesque banter—of a late date, 1878.

to any one of us four, remember any time when, knowing what a verse was, we did not also know and feel what a *correct* verse was. The early reading of really good poetry, and perhaps quite as much the constant hearing of our father's verses recited with perfect articulation and emphasis, may account for this.

The *Dramatis Personæ* of *The Slave* are set down thus:—"Don Manuel, a Spanish Lord; Traitor, an Officer; Slave, a Servant to Traitor; Mortimer, an English Knight; Guards, Messengers, etc." No plot is apparent, only constant oburgation and fighting. The utmost stretch of conjecture as to a plot would amount simply to this: Don Manuel is entitled to the allegiance of Traitor, who has deserted him, and sides with Mortimer; Slave is viewed with suspicion by all three; Traitor, getting the worst of it in a fight, kills himself; Mortimer, as an act of condolence for Traitor, kills himself; Slave is killed by Don Manuel, who is left surviving, *faute de mieux*. It will be observed that there is no "female interest" in the *The Slave*; and in fact the "gushing or ecstatic female" was, to all us infants, a personage less provocative of sentiment than of mirth. Often and fatuously did we laugh over Coleridge's poem of *Love (Genoieve)*—the very poem which, in an edition of Coleridge that I possess, my brother, in one of his latest years, marked with the word "Perfection."

In the same minute paper-book which contains *The Slave* Dante followed on, in a rather less rudimentary handwriting, with *The Beauties of Shakespeare*. These consist singly of Portia's speech, "The quality of mercy is not strained." Then comes *Aladdin, or The Wonderful Lamp*, by Gabriel Rossetti, Painter of Play-Pictures (this refers to his constant industry in colouring prints of stage-characters). *Aladdin* is in prose, and only a few lines were written, totally uninteresting. The sole amusing point about it is the List of Personages, which are assigned to such minor performers as "Mrs. Siddons, Mr. Kemble, Mr. Kean," and others whose names he got no doubt from his theatrical prints. The three

above named were already dead at the time. Mrs. Siddons, and more particularly Kemble (John Philip), had been well known—I may here observe—to Gaetano Polidori. After *Aladdin*, a few pages of the book are filled with drawings (of a kind). One is Guy Fawkes, with lantern and dagger. He is done in heavy ink-silhouette, which is blotted down upon the page that faces him.

And so much for *The Slave* and its adjuncts; which I might barely have mentioned, but for the fact that this "drama" has been adverted to in print before now, and it seemed desirable to settle once for all what it amounted to.

I must say a little more about infantine drawings—some in pencil, most in pen and ink, many of them coloured. Two represent his dormouse "Dwanging"; and, as Dwanging (so it appears to me) hardly existed at a date later than the completion of Dante's sixth year (12 May 1834), these must be extremely early affairs, not wholly unlike the look of the animal. To 1834 belongs also (as I have said) a portrait of his rocking-horse. These three are so far tolerable as to show that it was a pity he did not draw a little oftener from actual objects, but almost always mere inventions (such as they were), prompted to a large extent by his theatrical-character prints, with straddling legs and irrational pretences at costume. One that seems to my memory very early indeed is Macbeth contemplating the aerial dagger. A little book of childish drawings exists, chiefly from various plays. I will only name one subject from each play, as marked in our mother's handwriting—a pretty good indication that Dante himself was barely competent to write neatly at the time. These comprise *Talbot rescuing his son John from Orleans* (Shakespeare's *Henry VI.*); *Buckingham and Catesby presenting the crown to Richard*; *Prince Henry throwing Falstaff's bottle of sack at him*; *Combat between Macbeth and young Siward*; *Cæsar stabbing Cæsar*; *Rolla carrying off the Child* (from Sheridan's *Pizarro*).

In concluding this account of Dante Rossetti's earliest years, I must observe that he was certainly fortunate in his



family surroundings. His father was a poet and man of letters, his grandfather the same; his mother had a good appreciation of literary matters; his sisters and brother all watched with interest and seconded with zest whatever he did as a beginning at writing and at drawing. He had also the vast advantage of speaking two languages, of which one served as a direct introduction to Latin. In no quarter did he encounter anything to thwart his inclinations, to divert his steps, or to throw cold water on his small performances. He was not wilfully spoiled nor absurdly petted, nor was any difference made between him and the other children; but he felt himself to be encouraged as well as loved, and in most matters he had his own way. This, with the temper which was innate in him, he would perhaps have got anyhow; as things went, he got it unenforced. Naturally this favourable condition of family relations continued to grow with his growth.

## VII.

### *SCHOOL.*

It must have been after the midsummer holidays of 1836 that Dante Rossetti first went to school; I followed him after the Christmas holidays. The school was that of the Rev. Mr. Paul, in Roley Street, Portland Place—a day-school for most of the pupils, or perhaps all. There was, I think, only one assistant master, Mr. Paul's son. The pupils were not numerous—say twenty-five to thirty-five. They must chiefly have been sons of local tradesmen. I remember one set of boys—three brothers—of gentle birth and breeding, the Cummings; also Aikman, who (I have an impression) became an officer of some distinction in the Indian army. We were instructed in some rudimentary matters—writing, arithmetic (Dante Gabriel was always bad at this, and to the end of his days I fancy he would have been at fault here and there in the multiplication table), English grammar, geography,

history, and the first steps in Latin. We also had to do a "theme" once or twice—a composition upon some given subject;<sup>1</sup> and we received some little drawing tuition from a French Master, M. Abeille, whom we considered deft in his touch of foliage. We liked the younger Mr. Paul; to the elder we had—and ought to have had—no objection, but I remember little of him. One of my few individual recollections of the school is that of hearing there the tolling bell which announced the death of King William the Fourth. Among our school-books was a volume of selections, prose and poetry, named *The Rhetorical Class-book*, containing such pieces as Campbell's *Lochiel's Warning*, and his *Last Man*, with marginal directions as to the proper tone, inflexion, gesture, etc., for reciting them. We enjoyed a great deal of the text in this book, and giggled over the directions—having always had in our father, and indeed in our mother too, models that would have bettered that form of instruction.

An English school such as that of Mr. Paul (and I must say the same of King's College School, to which we went afterwards) is not an academy of good manners, nor yet of high thinking; and it would be too true to acknowledge that Dante Rossetti rapidly deteriorated here. I would add the same very emphatically of myself, but that I am not exactly in question, and need not intrude my small personality. At home he had witnessed nothing but resolute and cheerful performance of duty, and heard nothing that was not pure right, high-minded, and looking to loftier things. School first brought him face to face with that which is "common and unclean." There is always some nasty-thinking boy to egg-on his juniors upon a path of unsavouriness. A certain

<sup>1</sup> If the reader would like a laugh, he may perhaps get it out of the following. One of the schoolboys (I do not mean either Dante or myself) was told to do a theme on Candour. His theme—I have never forgotten it—was in the following words, as near as may be: "My dear father—I want to write to you on the subject of Candour. He is a most benevolent, candid, honourable, sordid, and surly young man. His friends love him dearly."

A. (his initial shall stand instead of his name), who sat next to Dante Gabriel, beset him with promptings of a worse than useless kind. One thing was pointing out phrases in the Bible which he held to be vastly amusing, but which little Dante did not want to be teased with. Dante mentioned the matter to his father, who conferred with Mr. Paul; and A. was ordered to take a different seat in the school, and stick to it. This is nearly all that I remember in a definite way about Mr. Paul's school. Dante was a ready learner, and a willing one enough. The last performance, as the school was breaking up for the holidays, was an evening of recitations in the presence of parents and friends. Dante delivered (from Shakespear's *Julius Cæsar*) the speech of Antony over the body of Cæsar, and I the speech of Brutus. We were clapped to our heart's content.

As a Professor in King's College, Gabriele Rossetti was entitled to send one son to the day-school there free of charge, and a second son at reduced fees. It had therefore always been intended that we boys should go to that school as soon as a little preliminary instruction had been gained at Mr. Paul's establishment; and thither accordingly we went after the midsummer holidays of 1837. Dante was rightfully admissible, having attained the regulation age of nine; I was not so, being not quite eight, but was allowed to pass muster. As this is a day-school (although a few pupils were housed as boarders), we went daily to and fro. At first we took the route by Regent Street and the Strand to Somerset House, but afterwards preferred the more plebeian, and to us more amusing, shops of Tottenham Court Road and St. Giles's (no New Oxford Street then existed). The Head Master was the Rev. Dr. Major, of whom, in Dante Gabriel's time, we saw little. The Principal was Dr. Lonsdale, Bishop of Lichfield. The school was then, as it is now, of strict Church-of England principle, and most of the masters were clergymen. On one or two occasions I saw prizes distributed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Howley—a little old man, still wearing the episcopal white wig, of the gentlest manner and address, almost apologetic to the students (so it seemed)

for so far putting himself forward. He was—in regard at least to aspect and demeanour—anything but one of those *vescovi pettoruti* (bishops high in flesh) who were frequently in my father's mouth; for the latter disliked the worldly well-being and brow-beating respectability of the Anglican clergy only a little less than the arrogant bigotry of their Roman compeers. The great prize-receiver in those days was Arthur Cayley, the pre-eminent Cambridge Mathematician, who would come up for three or four successive prizes in one afternoon. His younger brother, Charles Bagot Cayley, was one of my father's pupils in Italian, and learned the language admirably, as shown by his fine translations of Dante and Petrarca—a most estimable scholarly man, without a taint of mundane self-seeking. I forget how many languages he knew. If he did not know one, he only had to learn it. He was once asked, by some missionary or other society, to translate the Gospels for the Iroquois. He went to the British Museum Library, looked up an Iroquois grammar or two, and, at the end of six weeks or so, he undertook the task, and performed it.

My brother and myself entered King's College School in the lowest class—the Lower First—of which the Rev. Mr. Hayes was the Master. Some schoolboy called him "Bantam," from his red complexion and facial angle; and every other schoolboy followed suit. To us he was kind; and he perhaps stretched a point by returning our "characters," in the first quarterly report, as "in every respect satisfactory" for Dante, and for myself "in the highest degree commendable." Some other good reports of us may have followed, but certainly none so flowery as that.

Dante Rossetti's school-life at King's College lasted just five years, from the autumn of 1837 to the summer of 1842. He had no further schooling of any kind, except some German lessons taken at home, and his instruction for the pictorial profession. When he left school, he wrote an excellent hand; knew Latin reasonably well, up to Sallust, Ovid, Virgil, etc.; had the beginning of a knowledge of Greek, but I can hardly

say whether, after a few years' interval, he could even read the Greek characters with any readiness; understood French well—well enough to begin forthwith, which he did, reading any number of French novels for himself; and had some inkling on subjects of history, geography, etc. He always saw easily into linguistic and grammatical matters, so far as he cared to pursue them. He had also been brought on a little in drawing, of a more or less sketchy kind. In the classes generally (but not in the drawing-class) the boys had to be seated in the order of their proficiency, one of them "taking the place" of another as occasion arose; and Dante was usually pretty near the head of a class. Of anything even distantly tending to science—algebra, geometry, etc.—he learned nothing whatever. The religious instruction at King's College School counted for little: there were some prayers and a chapter of the Bible in the morning. But all this time he continued going to church *en famille*, without much liking or any serious distaste. In early childhood came Trinity Church, Marylebone Road; then St. Katharine's, Regent's Park; then Christ Church, Albany Street.

I will run over a few other particulars—I hope, with due brevity. The Upper First Class was conducted by the Rev. Mr. Cockayne, who became—or possibly then was—a good scholar in Early English. The Second, by the Rev. Swinburne Carr, author of a serviceable *History of Greece*. The Third, by the Rev. Mr. Hodgson, an ungainly little man whom the boys did not like. I cannot say that Dante or myself had any reason to complain of him. There was a legend that he knew very little about the matters on which he instructed the boys, and that he had to prepare his own lessons overnight. As to this I of course know nothing. In the Fourth Class, the last which Dante Gabriel entered, the Master was the Rev. Mr. Fearnley. Of him also a legend was current, purporting to account for a seam visible in his throat. It was really, I presume, a seam of a scrofulous nature; but the legend ran that he had once cut his throat with suicidal intention, and had only been saved at the last gasp. Mr. Fearnley,

a large stalwart man, was considered severe, and the boys were not very fond of being promoted into his class—which may be a reason why some one concocted the legend. Each of these classes numbered some thirty boys, more or less; perhaps one or two of them attained to forty.

There were also the Writing and Arithmetic Masters, the French Masters, and the Drawing Masters. Mr. Allsop, the Head Writing Master, was a great adept in his craft, and would at times come round to one class or another displaying a *chef d'œuvre* of calligraphy, full of the most astonishing flourishes. He was odd, and left the school not long after we entered it; and I fear that the story I was told, that he had gone out of his mind, was a true one. His successor was a small old man, Mr. Hutton, of venerable grandfatherly aspect, with white hair. He was easily put out, and some of the boys, being as pitiless as other boys, put him out when they could. Dante held aloof from this indignity. The French Masters were Mm. Gassion and Wattez, and Professor Brasseur, all very competent men; the first two considerate to their pupils, and the third, who could be sarcastic as well as considerate, a scholar of some rank. He was afterwards French Preceptor to the Prince of Wales, and died at a recent date, aged, I think, about ninety. The Drawing Master was the most interesting personage of all—the celebrated member of the Norwich School of Painting, John Sell Cotman. He was aged fifty-five when Dante Rossetti entered King's College School—an alert, forceful-looking man, of moderate stature, with a fine well-moulded face, which testified to an impulsive nature somewhat worn and wearied. He seemed sparing of speech, but high-strung in whatever he said. In fact, the seeds of madness lurked in this distinguished artist, although, apart from a rather excitable or abrupt manner in ruling his hear-garden, I never noticed any symptoms of it. Pretty soon he left the school, and, just as Dante also was leaving it, in July 1842, he died insane. Mr. Cotman's course of instruction did not extend far beyond giving us pencil-sketches, often of his own, to copy.—fisher-folk, troopers, peasants,

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boating, etc. Dante's copies were, I suppose, considered to count among the more satisfactory, but I am not aware that Cotman ever fixed particular attention upon him. As Drawing Master he was succeeded by his son, Miles Edward Cotman. The latter died in 1858, aged only forty-seven; and I fancy that he also, though perfectly quiet and collected in manner, was a little peculiar.

In Mr. Hall Caine's book—*Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 1882—there is a passage which deserves quotation here :—

"He is described, by those who remember him at this period, as a boy of a gentle and affectionate nature, albeit prone to outbursts of masterfulness. It is said that he was brave and manly of temperament, courageous as to personal suffering, eminently solicitous of the welfare of others, and kind and considerate to such as he had claims upon. This is no doubt true portraiture; but it must be stated (however open to explanation, on grounds of laudable self-depreciation) that it is not the picture which he himself used to paint of his character as a boy. He often described himself as being destitute of personal courage when at school, as shrinking from the amusements of school-fellows, and fearful of their quarrels—not wholly without generous impulses, but in the main selfish of nature, and reclusive in habit of life. He would have had you believe that school was to him a place of semi-purgatorial probation."

All this is put in a very fair spirit by Mr. Caine, and it merits a little reflection. No one now alive perhaps, except myself, could, with any clear knowledge and recollection, say whether Dante Rossetti was "destitute of personal courage when at school." I do not consider that he was by any means thus destitute. I have seen him fight with a proper degree of tenacity when the occasion arose; but it is strictly true that he was "fearful of the quarrels" of schoolfellows, in the sense that he totally disliked that loutish horse-play and that scrambling pugnacity which are so eminently distinctive of the British stripling. The meaningless defiance, the bullying onset, and the mauling scuffle, looked to him ugly, base, detestable, and semi-human. If he was mistaken, I should

like to know wherein. The bull-dog propensity to pin somebody by the muzzle, whether deserving to be so pinned or not, was not any part of his character, inborn or acquired. Neither had he any liking for being set up by his school-fellows, without quarrel of his own, to fight a boy two or three inches taller than himself, and with half as much again in thews and sinews. That he was "in the main selfish of nature" is true when the statement is properly understood, but it might easily be misconstrued. He was selfish, in the sense of self-centred. His own aims, his own opportunities, the working-out of such faculty as he found within himself—these were always his chief concern. To term him "self-willed"—which he most eminently was from first to last—would give a much more correct idea than to term him "selfish." He was not selfish in the sense of being dull in affection to others, indifferent to their welfare, or unwilling to exert himself to do them a benefit. He had a theory, which I have heard him express at various periods of life, that men who have an originating gift—or, in a broad sense, what we call men of genius—are all selfish in that same mood of being self-centred. He would say it of such poets as Dante, Milton, Göthe, Wordsworth, Shelley, or of Shakespeare if the facts of his life were adequately known—of such painters and sculptors as Titian, Cellini, Rembrandt, Blake, and Turner. And here again I apprehend that he was remote from being wrong. That "school was to him a place of semi-purgatorial probation" is, I dare say, nearly true. It is a fact however that, if in reality he felt this at the time deeply, he passed it off lightly; for to me, who was his daily colleague and confidant, he never, so far as I can remember, unbosomed himself to any such effect. That contact with school-life did the reverse of good to the character of the boyish Rossetti is what I have already avowed. His regard for veracity, the strictness of his sense of honour, his readiness to brave inconvenience for principle, were subject to daily undermining; for the moral atmosphere around reeked too perceptibly of unverity, slipperiness, and

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shirking. His temper too, which was always an arbitrary and peremptory one, did not improve ; but he retained unimpaired two valuable qualities—an easy good-nature, and a facility at forgiving and forgetting. From infancy onwards he was always a great favourite with servants, shoe-blackening men, organ-grinders, and people of the like class. Brightness of parts and brightness of manner ensured this.

I have not yet referred to the statement reported by Mr. Caine about “shrinking from the amusements of schoolfellows.” This is entirely true, if “shrinking” means “abstaining.” He cared nothing for rough pastimes—though he would race about in the scanty playground with others, bear a hand in snowballing, and so on ; but anything which would derive from personal liking, and would require time, pains, and practice—such as skating, fishing, or cricket—he left entirely aside. He did not want it ; therefore he did not pursue it. To learn swimming, boating, and riding, would, no doubt, at school and after school, have been a benefit to him—a benefit which the habits and circumstances of the family and his own indifference withheld.

I was interested lately at finding, in a little *Memorial Volume* on Edgar Allan Poe, a poet of my brother's marked predilection, an account of that singular genius as a schoolboy which might almost have been penned for Dante Rossetti. The volume was published at Baltimore in 1877, and cannot be widely known on this side of the Atlantic. The writer of the passage is Poe's schoolfellow at Richmond, Virginia, Colonel J. T. L. Preston. He says :—

“Poe, as I recall my impressions now, was self-willed, capricious, inclined to be imperious, and, though of generous impulses, not steadily kind or even amiable.”

For Rossetti, the last clause should rather run—“not definitely amiable, nor even always steadily kind.”

The punishments in King's College School were of a mild character. There was no flogging. Now and again an irritated master would cuff a boy, or give him a bang on the

head with a book. This was an extempore, and I suppose an unsanctioned, performance. An offender was made to stand out in the middle of the room, or to stand upon a form for a while; or he was "kept in" during playtime; or he had to do an "imposition," such as copying out the same line from Virgil fifty times over. An ingenious boy would brace together two or three pens at a proper gradient, and thus write two or three lines with one turn of the hand.

There was no schoolfellow with whom Dante Rossetti contracted an intimate acquaintance, far less a life-long friendship; but two or three were in our house at times, or we in theirs. One of these was young Lockhart, a grandson of Sir Walter Scott, aged about thirteen when Dante was nine; a handsome, slim, straight-built youth, with very correct features. He was a great hand at cutting out little models of boats. He became the Lieutenant Walter Scott Lockhart-Scott, owner of Abbotsford, and died in 1853, aged only twenty-seven. Another boy was a son of William Westall the Landscape-painter (brother of the Richard Westall so well-known to Dante Rossetti through *Martin and Westall's Illustrations of the Bible*, a painter of some note in his day, who gave instructions to the Princess Victoria). This boy had a brother of weak mind and sometimes rather dangerous (not in King's College School), who went by the undignified name of "Sillikin." Another boy was Geldart Evans Rialore, who became a clergyman, and (I believe) Domestic Chaplain to the Duke of Buccleuch, a lad of good parts and refinement, son of a Doctor. Also the Wrays, sons of a deceased Colonial Judge; Boys, son of a leading printseller; Capper, whose father was a coal-merchant; Charles Anderson, who became a clergyman, doing good service in the East End of London; and the Willoughbys, sons of a legal gentleman living in Lancaster Place, close to King's College. Their family had the *entrée* to the Terrace of Somerset House overlooking the river; and we would sometimes join them on a half-holiday or holiday, taking possession of a little lodge there, burning shavings in an empty grate, and making an amount of noise

which was not kindly taken by the Government Clerks whose windows opened on to the Terrace. These several boys are about all I could specify. I make no mention of a very few others who were little or not at all known to my brother in his schooldays, but only to myself while my schooling was prolonged beyond his.

Dante Rossetti had a certain faint repute among his class-fellows as being addicted to drawing or sketching—making, on an exercise-book or the margin of a school-book, something that was understood to figure a knight, cavalier, trooper, brigand, or what not—or as buying and colouring theatrical characters, illustrated serials, and the like. To this small extent, therefore, he was noted as a little uncommon; and of course his foreign name and comparatively unschoolboy-like habits counted for something. I suppose also—though I do not recollect precise instances in point—that he was known for reciting verses. A certain schoolfellow, probably after Dante had left, handed over to me three or four poetical compositions which he himself had produced, one of them beginning with the words, “I would I were a smiling bird.” Dante laughed over the term, and made a portrait of the bird in the act of smiling.

The year 1842, when he quitted school, was the year of the Anglo-Chinese Opium War. He and I were told by a Master to make an original composition on the subject of China, and I think the composition had to be in verse. What he or I wrote I have totally forgotten: seemingly each of us must have produced some lines. Christina saw us at work, and chose to enter the poetic lists. She was then eleven years of age. She indited the following epical lines, which must (I apprehend) have been nearly the first verses she ever wrote.<sup>1</sup> Will the reader pardon my printing them?

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<sup>1</sup> There was a neat couplet which *may* have been earlier:—

“‘Come cheer up, my lads, ‘tis to glory we steer!’  
As the soldier remarked whose post lay in the rear.”

Two stanzas, dated 27 April 1842, for our mother's birthday (our grandfather printed them on a card) were, I consider, earlier also. The original MS.—of a very childish aspect—is now in the British Museum.

## THE CHINAMAN.

" 'Centre of Earth ! ' a Chinaman he said,  
And bent over a map his pig-tailed head,--  
That map in which, portrayed in colours bright,  
China, all dazzling, burst upon the sight :  
' Centre of Earth ! ' repeatedly he cries,  
' Land of the brave, the beautiful, the wise ! '  
Thus he exclaimed ; when to his words arrested  
Showed what sharp agony his head had tested.  
He feels a tug--another, and another--  
And quick exclaims, ' Hallo ! what's now the bother ? '  
But soon alas perceives. And, ' Why, false night,  
Why not from men shut out the hateful sight ?  
The faithless English have cut off my tail,  
And left me my sad fortunes to bewail.  
Now in the streets I can no more appear,  
For all the other men a pig-tail wear.'  
He said, and furious cast into the fire  
His tail : those flames became its funeral-pyre."

## VIII.

### *HOME-LIFE DURING SCHOOL--SIR HUGH THE HERON.*

I HAVE already said that Dante Rossetti (as well as the rest of us) used in early childhood to get some countrifying at our grandfather's house, Holmer Green in Buckinghamshire. There he loitered about a little, doing nothing particular. His chief amusement was to haunt a pond in the grounds, and catch frogs. It concerned him to notice that, if he held a frog any considerable while in his hand, the skin of the amphibian's throat, lacking its proper quota of moisture, would split across. This did not cure him of catching frogs ; but he was fain to hope that his captive, on being restored to its pond, would find its throat "sewing itself up again." All his life he liked most animals (though he had little ado with dogs, and none with horses), and was not ill-natured to any. Even a black beetle was regarded with a certain indulgence ; it was an animal, much like another.

These little and never frequent country excursions came to an end in 1839, when our grandfather resettled in London; and then Dante Rossetti, for two or three years, went out of London not at all, for our father had not the habit of making any annual seaside or rural trip. Dante's holidays, when school closed, were spent at home in London, varied by casual walks up to Hampstead, or the like. He painted theatrical characters, read books, and amused himself as the chance offered; and now he had at least the resource of going to his grandfather's house near Regent's Park whenever he felt so inclined. The house contained many books. It had, at the back, a moderate-sized garden, sloping down towards Regent's Canal; and in this garden a shed or summer-house sheltered the private printing-press which Polidori used. The fact—such I believe it to be—that Dante never once tried what he could do as a compositor is one more symptom of his great inaptitude at anything of a mechanical or directly practical kind. The workaday world was not *his* world.

In this house occurred a small incident which Mr. Caine has related—not with perfect accuracy. It did not take place when Dante was "rather less than nine years of age," for he was already eleven when our grandfather entered the house. The incident may really belong to his twelfth, or possibly his thirteenth, year. He did not deliberately set-to at reciting the closing scene of *Othello*; but, taking up a chisel, he playfully motioned to strike Christina with it. As Maria had sense enough to object that it might hurt, he insisted that it would not; and (then for the first time speaking a few lines from *Othello*, ending—

"I took by the throat the circumcised dog,  
And smote him thus")

he struck the chisel forcibly against his chest. Naturally there was an incision, but not a serious one. Sangiovanni probed it, and pretty soon it was healed. The small matter is hardly worth adverting to, but may as well be set right.

Another small matter, a little more symptomatic as to the

boyhood of Rossetti, is the following. Maria was, as previously intimated, of an uncommonly enthusiastic temper, which eventually settled down into religious devotion. As she read very early and very constantly, her enthusiasms developed in divers directions: British tars, Napoleon, Englishmen *versus* Scotchmen (in relation to Walter Scott's writings), Grecian mythology, and the *Iliad*. Pope's translation alone was known to her. When Dante and I began learning Greek she resolved to learn some too, partly to help us in our lessons; and she made her way into the Greek New Testament, and could in her later years still read it fairly with the aid of a dictionary. While the *Iliad* fit was at its height, Dante, to please her, undertook to do a series of pen-and-ink designs for the epic, on a small scale, one design to each Book. This was in February 1840, when he was eleven years of age. These drawings—they still exist—are not in any tolerable degree good, nor even distinctly promising; but they may count for something as showing the lad's ambitious temper in design, and his willingness to take up any attempt that offered, however ludicrously inadequate his means for coping with it. I may add that Dante at this time, although he had not that glowing love of the *Iliad* which his sister entertained, liked it highly, and read it much. In later years he knew, and he also preferred, the *Odyssey*.

From the *Iliad* I pass to other books read by Dante in his school-days, as a sequel to the details previously given relating to a still earlier period. The poet who superseded Walter Scott as prime favourite (always allowing for Shakespeare, who was never superseded though he may have been less constantly read) was Byron. *The Siege of Corinth* came first in the boy's esteem, and next *Mazeppa* and *Manfred*, with *The Corsair* and others to follow. *Childe Harold* he read, but without special zest; in fact, throughout his life, the poetry of sentimental or reflective description had a very minor attraction for him. Of Dickens's *Pickwick*, which came out in 1836, he seems to me to have known comparatively little; but *Nicholas Nickleby*, 1838-9, was very potent with

him, followed by *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge*, etc. An illustrated serial named *Tales of Chivalry* (but chivalry is not more prominent in its pages than some other things) was constantly read, and its woodcuts inspected and coloured; also another serial, of earlier date, called *Legends of Terror*, full of ghosts, fiends, and magic, in prose and verse. There was likewise *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, abounding in dragons, enchanters, and other marvels of pseudo-chivalry. *Hone's Every-day Book*, with its amusing woodcuts, and the *Newgate Calendar*, were marked favourites. The mere thieves in the last-named repertory excited but a languid interest, but the murderers, and their "last dying speeches and confessions," were conned with decided gusto. Of highly-reputed romances there were Bulwer's *Rienzi* and *Last Days of Pompeii*, and, of minor romances, three serials—*Robin Hood* and *Wat Tyler*, both by Pierce Egan the younger, and *Ada the Betrayed, or The Murder at the Old Smithy*, by some obscure author whose name did not transpire. *Gil Blas* and *Don Quixote* were enjoyed, though not in any extreme degree. But perhaps in his earlier school-days—or from the age of nine to eleven—nothing delighted Dante quite so much as a small-sized series entitled *Brigand Tales*, with coloured illustrations. A subsequent series appeared, which he relished somewhat less, whether because he was growing out of them, or on account of their being more forced and worked up in incident. The opening series comprised *Moriano the Outlaw, or the Bandit of the Charmed Wrist*; *Beauty and the Bear, or The Bandit's Stratagem*; *The Female Brigand, or The Lover's Doom*; and a number of others: with such illustrations as *Desperate Encounter between Benedetto the Brigand and Jeronymo Arondini*; *Guillen Martino plundering the Monks of the Abbey of San Isidor*; *Pietro d'Armoredelli, Captain of Banditti, refusing to stay the Execution of his own Son*, etc., etc. This publication was followed by *Dramatic Tales*, a set of narratives from popular plays, contemporary or antecedent. These also were highly appreciated by Dante Rossetti. By

the time he left school—turned of fourteen—he had devoured numerous novels, poems, and dramas, apart from those here specified, almost all of them being in English. In Italian there was little beyond Ariosto; in French, it may be that Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* preceded the close of his schooling, but I am not sure. At any rate this, and many other works of Hugo, both prose and verse, fascinated him hugely very soon afterwards; and French novels by a variety of authors were greatly in the ascendant for two or three years. It may be feared there was *no* solid reading—whether history, biography, or anything else—irrespectively of the few and fragmentary things that he had to get up as a part of the school course. His intellectual life was nurtured upon fancy and sympathy, not upon knowledge or information.

Dante Rossetti did not write much in boyhood, but he wrote something. I question whether *The Slave* and *Aladdin* had any successor until in 1840 a grand scheme was started that every one of us four should write a romantic tale. I suppose each made a beginning, but I cannot affirm that any one of the quartette made an ending, unless it was Dante. His tale alone has been preserved, and it is so far completed as to bring a single set of incidents to a climax, without implying that anything else remains to be added. The tale is named *Roderick and Rosalba, a Story of the Round Table*. Its first chapter is headed, *The Knight, the Messenger, the Departure, the Hostelry, the Quarrel*; and it begins with the following sentence:—

"It was a dark and stormy night in the month of December when a figure, closely wrapped in the sable folds of his cloak, and mounted on a jaded steed, was seen hurrying across a bleak common towards a stately castle in the distance, whose lofty towers and time-worn battlements frowned over the wide expanse beneath."

This may suffice; with the bare addition that the tale narrates how a lady was captured by a "marauder" who wanted to wed her perforce, and how she was rescued by her affianced



behind him a little memorandum (the handwriting indicates a date towards 1881), which runs as follows :—

"I make this note after a conversation with a friend who had been reading in the British Museum a ridiculous first attempt of mine in verse, called *Sir Hugh the Heron*, which was printed when I was fourteen, but written (except the last page or two) at twelve—as my family would probably remember. When I was fourteen my grandfather (who amused himself by having a small private printing-press) offered, if I would finish it, to print it. I accordingly added the last precious touches two years after writing the rest. I leave this important explanation, as there is no knowing what fool may some day foist the absurd trash into print as a production of mine. It is curious and surprising to myself, as evincing absolutely no promise at all—less than should exist even at twelve. When I wrote it, the *only* English poet I had read was Sir W. Scott, as is plain enough in it."

This last statement is not wholly correct. There had been Shakespear, and I am sure, before my brother was twelve, a good deal of Byron as well.

I have by me a MS. of an effusion, *William and Marie*, shorter than *Sir Hugh the Heron*, written when my brother was fifteen, in a style which is compounded of Walter Scott and the old Scottish ballads; it may also present some trace of Bürger's *Lenore*. This may be accounted a trifle inferior even to the performance denounced by its author in such vigorous terms. It narrates how a wicked Knight slew a virtuous one, hurled into a moat the virtuous one's lady-love, and got killed by an avenging flash of lightning. This my brother offered for publication to the Editor of some magazine—I fancy *Smallwood's Magazine*—along with an outline design to illustrate it. The outline, not so greatly amiss, is adapted from a group in one of Filippo Pistrucchi's lithographs from Roman history, the Rape of the Sabines. The Editor was too sensible to publish either poem or design. It will be perceived that this small transaction belongs to a date a little later than that when Rossetti left school; but it is mentioned

here so as to close my references to these very early efforts in verse. There may possibly have been a few others, but I fail to recollect any. The reader may have noticed that the times of chivalry always furnished his boyish inspiration; in fact, he thought of little else about this date. Neither the antique nor the modern exercised the least sway over his fancy.

A few words more may be bestowed upon childish drawings; I mention such only as I find inscribed with a distinct date. Two are coloured designs, October 1836 (age eight), from Monk Lewis's thrilling drama of *The Castle Spectre*. One is *Percy and Motley*, the other *Osmond and Kenrick*, each personage being in full face, which may suggest that little Dante hardly knew how to set about a profile. In 1838 he produced a scene of school-life from his "Lower First" class. It is lettered *Bantam battering* (i.e., pummelling a boy); *Lower Division--Upper Division*. These two Divisions of the schoolboys are represented as indulging in a free fight. The design is not quite so bad as might be expected, the actions having a certain degree of natural spirit and diversity. Then comes, 1840, an illustrated title-page, forming a neat and rather prettyish decorative combination, for the four juvenile stories of which *Roderick and Rosalba* was one. Anyhow he got a great deal into the small space of a page of note-paper. There are four circular half-figures of armoured knights, and four oblong compositions exhibiting incidents in the tales. The four knights are inscribed thus: *A Romance of the 14th Century, Sir Aubrey de Metford; Roderick and Rosalba, Sir Roderick de Malvon; Raimond and Matilda, Sir Raimond de Meryl; Retribution, Sir Guy de Linton*. And the four compositions thus: *Sir Aubrey killing Herman Rudesheim; Sir Roderick rescuing Rosalba de Clare; Sir Raimond conquering Sir Richard; Sir Guy finding the letter of Ali*. Next are three small designs, 1840, from the *Arabian Nights*—*The Genius about to kill the Princess of the Isle of Ebony*, and two others. Three largeish separate figures from Bulwer's *Rienzi*, May to July 1840, come next; done with pen and ink in a

painstaking manner, though not with anything, in character or costume, above the types which Dante derived from his beloved theatrical characters. November 1840 witnessed the production of *Earl Warren* (dictating, it would seem, the signing of Magna Charta). This is a companion-drawing to the *Rienzi* trio, but perceptibly better. Last we find a modern subject of a patriotic turn, taken, I assume, from a little volume of naval anecdotes which Maria used to cherish. Its theme is inscribed as follows :—

“ ‘As you are not of my parish,’ said a gentleman to a begging sailor, ‘I cannot think of relieving you.’ ‘Sir,’ replied the tar with an air of heroism, ‘I lost my leg fighting for *all* parishes.’ ”

This is dated August 1841, and certainly shows some increased degree of facility in putting a couple of figures together so as to form a group and tell a story.

It must have been, I think, just before Dante Rossetti left school that he began learning German. He learned it well up to a certain point, yet not so as to read freely ; and I suppose that, by the age of twenty-five to thirty, he may have forgotten four-fifths of what he had acquired. One day Dr. Adolf Heimann, the Professor of German at University College, presented himself in our house, saying that he wished to learn Italian from our father, and would be prepared in recompense to teach German to the four children. He was a German-Jew, an excellent little man of considerable acquirements, and as kind-hearted, open, genial a person as any one could wish to know. The arrangement was assented to ; and Dante, with the rest of us, set to at German, learning the grammar and pronunciation, reading the *Sagen und Märchen* (folk-stories), some easy things in Schiller, etc. For several years after this date—or up to 1848 or thereabouts—we saw more of the Heimann family than of any other. The Doctor married towards 1843, and soon there were children in his house.

## IX.

*STUDY FOR THE PAINTING PROFESSION—CARY'S AND  
THE R.A.*

DANTE ROSSETTI now—summer of 1842—craved to launch into the definite study of pictorial art. Of ordinary schooling he supposed himself to have had about as much as would serve his turn. Our father's health was already so far broken as to give cause for serious anxiety; he therefore concurred with Dante in holding that the sooner artistic studies were undertaken the better. My brother did not return to King's College School after the summer vacation, but looked out for an Academy of Art.

Gabriele Rossetti had known the Rev. Mr. Cary, the translator of Dante, whose son, F. S. Cary, a painter of no great mark, kept at this time that well-reputed drawing academy which was termed "Sass's," in Bloomsbury Street, Bedford Square. To this institution my brother betook himself—perhaps as soon as he left King's College School, but at all events not long afterwards. Our father's acquaintance in the world of art was far from extensive. He knew pretty well Mr. Eastlake, afterwards Sir Charles Eastlake, P.R.A., Mr. Severn the friend of Keats, and Mr. and Mrs. Bartholomew the flower-painters; he also saw once or twice John Martin, and Mr. Solomon Hart, R.A., but this latter may have been at a date rather after that of which I am now speaking. These appear to have been all.

Of what my brother did at Cary's, and whom he knew there, I can give but a meagre account; his Family-letters throw a little, but only a little, light on the subject. He and I were still always together in the evening; but in the day, while he was at the drawing academy, I continued in attendance at King's College School, up to February 1845, and then I went to the Excise Office in Old Broad Street. He drew from the antique and the skeleton, with immense liking for the profession of art, but with only moderate interest in

these preliminaries. He also studied anatomy in some books, but never, I think, in the actual subject, human or animal. Of his class-fellows we saw little. I can vaguely recollect Sintzenich, a youth whose sympathies were shared between painting and music, and who finally took to the latter. There was also a youth named Thomas Doughty, son of a self-taught American Landscape-painter, who had come over to London in quest of fortune, which did not smile upon him. I cannot say with certainty that the younger Doughty was a student at Cary's rather than the Royal Academy, but I am pretty sure that so he was. For a year or two he was my brother's chief intimate. I have not unfrequently accompanied Dante to drink tea and spend the evening in the house of the Doughtys, a small semi-villa residence close to Gloucester Gate, Regent's Park. The father was a rather convivial plain-spoken man; the mother a pleasant bright-mannered little lady, who had, I dare say, more than enough of domestic disquietude. The intimacy with young Doughty may have begun early in 1846, and, lasting throughout 1847, was brought to a close by the return of the family to America—presumably before the middle of 1848. We saw them off on their ship. Thomas Doughty must have been two years or more older than my brother, and had seen a good deal more of "life." I recollect he introduced us to two odd characters. One was a semi-artistic working shoemaker, living near Westminster Bridge. The other was a quick-witted lively young American, Charley Ware, leading a harum-scarum kind of life in lodgings off Leicester Square. I will not here tread rashly into his domestic penetralia. He had literary likings, much concerned with Edgar Poe, which was a bond of sympathy with my brother; and he was the first person to reveal to the latter the glories of Bailey's *Plebeius* (which Dante read over and over again for a while) by reciting the sublime opening—

"Eternity hath snowed its years upon them;  
And the white winter of their age is come,  
The world and all its worlds, and all shall end."

Charley Ware had some hankerings also after pictorial art, without any training. He produced a little oil-picture of a queer kind. I would give something to see it now, but presume it has long since "ended" among the "world and all its worlds." It represented the Devil, with Ware himself, Doughty, and Dante Gabriel; possibly one or two others. They were either playing whist at Ware's lodgings, or enjoying a light symposium. Each head was a tolerably characteristic likeness. Mr. Ware returned to America, perhaps before the Doughtys. I have often been rather surprised that, in all my miscellaneous readings, I never came across the name of him as doing something or other—for his sharpness of faculty was a good deal beyond the average. Thomas Doughty, I believe, remained in America quite undistinguished. I take him to be dead for many years past.

It may have been through the Doughty connexion that my brother got to see, in an American journal, a little copy of verses whose monumental imbecility delighted him beyond measure. It is named *The Atheist*, by *Flora McIver*. Often and to many an auditor have I heard my brother repeat *The Atheist*, and I suppose he could have done so to his dying day. "The idea," he would say, "of a confirmed Atheist who has never yet considered whether or not a flower was made by a God!" I am tempted to extract the poem here; it may perhaps again excite some of that glee with which I have often seen it greeted aforetime.

"The Atheist in his garden stood  
At twilight's pensive hour;  
His little daughter by his side  
Was gazing on a flower.

"'Oh pick that blossom, Pa, for me,'  
The little prattler said;  
'It is the fairest one that blooms  
Within that lowly bed.'

"The father plucked the chosen flower,  
And gave it to his child;  
With parted lips and sparkling eye  
She seized the gift, and smiled.

" 'Oh Pa, who made this pretty flower,  
This little violet blue?  
Who gave it such a fragrant smell  
And such a lovely hue?'

" A change came o'er the father's brow,  
His eye grew strangely wild;  
New thoughts within him had been stirred  
By that sweet artless child.

" The truth flashed on the father's mind,  
The truth in all its power;  
'There is a God, my child,' he said,  
'Who made that little flower.'"

This matter of Thomas Doughty and his circle has led me somewhat out of my track of date. I now return to the days of Cary's Academy, which lasted for my brother from about July 1842 to July 1846. As to what he did there I am unable to distinguish much between the earlier and the later years. In Mrs. Esther Wood's book, *Dante Rossetti and the Præraphacite Movement* (1894),<sup>1</sup> some anecdotes are given upon the authority of a fellow-student, Mr. J. A. Vinter. They speak of waywardness as a pupil, irregular attendance, "a certain brusquerie and unapproachableness of bearing," combined with warm affection and generosity, fondness for practical jokes, boisterous hilarity, loud singing, especially of a song about Alice Gray, the sketching of caricatures of antiques, and attractive outlining produced by a process contrary to his master's precepts. Some of these points I know, and others I readily surmise, to be correct; am not however so sure about "practical jokes." A practical joke played off by one young student upon another is usually something

<sup>1</sup> This book has been loudly and widely praised, and also severely criticized. It is very laudatory of Rossetti, a fact which I cannot view without some favourable bias towards the book. In other respects I may perhaps be permitted to say that Mrs. Wood, having commendably lofty ideals and ideas of her own, reads these (in my opinion) far too freely into the performances of the so-called Præraphacite painters and poets, and has not much notion of the sort of thing that comes uppermost with a painter when he sets to work.

which either mortifies the victim, or traverses his work in a troublesome and annoying way ; and to jokes of this sort I should say that Dante Rossetti was not at any time given, but rather noticeable for shunning and censuring them. However, Mr. Vinter ought to know best, and I am sure that he does not mean to lead to any mistaken inference ; moreover, one practical joke is clearly traceable in my Letter B. 8. At home my brother never played any such jokes ; neither was he addicted to them at school, nor in the slightest degree at any period of his fully adult life. For singing he had naturally a more than tolerable voice ; but, apart from mere juvenile outbursts, he never cared to use it, still less to train it, and was even put out if the subject was alluded to.

One of the principal anecdotes develops the following dialogue. *Cary* : Why were you not here yesterday ? *Rossetti* : I had a fit of idleness—this reply being succeeded by the distribution among the students of "a bundle of manuscript sonnets." Mr. Vinter (or else Mrs. Wood) assumes that these sonnets were juvenile affairs, which Rossetti, at a later date, would have been sorry to see forthcoming. To the best of my recollection, Rossetti, up to July 1846 when he left Cary's, did not produce any sonnets of his own—unless *possibly* (and even these seem to me to have begun rather later) sonnets written to *bouts rimés*, of which at one period he rattled off a very large number. The Vinter sonnets may perhaps have been some of his translations from Dante and other Italian poets ; these commenced as early as 1845. They were, from the first, good work—indeed excellent work—of which he would not at any date have been ashamed ; although it is true that at starting the youthful translator indulged in some mannerisms and quaintnesses which he corrected before the versions appeared in print in 1861.

Apart from the direct course of his studies, the greatest artistic event to Dante Rossetti during his time at Cary's was the opening of the Exhibitions, at Westminster Hall, of Cartoons, prior to the pictorial decoration of the new Houses of Parliament. These displays took place in 1843, '44, and '45.

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His letter of 7 July 1843 bears testimony to the extreme interest he took in the first of these Exhibitions; the second was a still more marking event in his career, as it made known to him, by the Cartoons of *Wilhelmus Conquistator* (the Body of Harold brought to William of Normandy), and *Adam and Eve after the Fall*, the genius of Mr. Ford Madox Brown; the third contained the Cartoon of *Justice* and some examples of fresco-painting by the same artist.<sup>1</sup> Rossetti also saw at an early date two of Brown's oil-pictures, *The Death-bed of the Giaour*, and *Parisina*.

In July 1846, having sent-in the requisite probation-drawings, Rossetti was admitted as a student in the Antique School of the Royal Academy, and Cary's knew him no more. Mr. George Jones, R.A., was the Keeper of the Antique School; a rather aged painter, noted as resembling, on a feeble scale, the great Duke of Wellington, whose costume he imitated. 'Towards this date he chiefly exhibited' sepia-drawings of scriptural or military subjects. A gradual and reasonable amount of progress was made in the Academy School, but only (I apprehend) on the same general lines as in the initial stages at Cary's; in other words, Rossetti worked with a genuine sense of enthusiasm as to the end in view, but with something which might count as indifference and laxity with regard to the means dictated to him as conducing to that end. He once said to me—it may have been towards 1857 or later—"As soon as a thing is imposed on me as an obligation, my aptitude for doing it is gone; what I *ought* to do is what I *can't* do." This went close to the essence of his character, and was true of him through life. As the years rolled on, what he ought to do was very often what he chose and liked to do, and then the difficulty vanished; but in his student days it consisted in attending assiduously to matters for which, in themselves, he cared little or not at all, and a real obstruction was the result. As his gift for fine art was indisputably far superior to that of the great majority of his fellow-

<sup>1</sup> I believe I am correct as to these several dates; far wrong I cannot be.

students, and as his drawings from the antique etc. were (I presume) in reasonable proportion to his gift, I know of no reason why he did not rapidly complete his course in the Antique School, and proceed to the Life and the Painting Schools—which he never did—except this same:—That the obligation which lay upon him was to sag over the antique and cognate first steps in art, and that, being obliged, he found the will to be lacking. A resolute sense of duty, firm faith in his instructors, and a disposition to do what was wanted in the same way as other people, might have furnished the will. But all these qualities were also at that time lacking, or present in a scanty degree. He liked to do what he himself chose, and, even if he did what some one else prescribed, he liked to do that more or less in his own way.

We are now approaching, though we have not yet reached, the period when the "Præraphælite idea" developed itself in the minds of three Academy students—John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt, each of whom had already exhibited some pictures of his own, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who had not exhibited. It will be well therefore that I should guide my narrative of Rossetti's student-days, as far as manageable, by the details published by Mr. Hunt, and also by another of the original Præraphælitites, Mr. Stephens.<sup>1</sup> Rossetti preceded Hunt as an Academy student. Up to May 1848, as Mr. Hunt says,—

"I had only been on nodding-terms with him in the school. He had always a following of noisy students there, and these had kept me from approaching him with more than a nod, except when once I found him perched on some steps drawing Ghiberti, whom I also studied; that nobody else did so had given us subject for five minutes' talk."

The statement that Rossetti was "drawing Ghiberti"

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hunt's contribution consists of three articles in *The Contemporary Review* for 1886, *The Præraphælite Brotherhood*. Mr. Stephens's monograph has been already referred to. Mr. Hunt has also published an able article *Præraphælitism*, in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.

means, of course, that he was drawing from a cast of the famous Florentine bronze doors, Ghiberti's work in the early fifteenth century. I remember that he used to speak to me with great fervency of the grace of motive, the abundance of artistic invention, and the fine handling, of the doors; and Mr. Hunt's statement on this small point is of substantial interest, as showing that both he and Rossetti had gravitated towards this mediæval work at a date possibly a full year before Præraphælitism took any sort of definite shape.

I will also extract (with a few comments) Mr. Hunt's description of Rossetti's person and manner. It is better—at any rate, in some respects—than any which I could supply, and will moreover be more readily believed in by the public.

“A young man of decidedly foreign aspect, about 5 feet 7] in height, with long brown hair touching his shoulders [this is strongly shown in the pencil drawing by Rossetti now in the National Portrait Gallery, but it did not continue long], not taking care to walk erect, but rolling carelessly as he slouched along, pouting with parted lips, staring with dreaming eyes - the pupils not reaching the bottom lids—grey eyes, not looking directly at any point, but gazing listlessly about; the openings large and oval, the lower orbits dark-coloured. His nose was aquiline but delicate, with a depression from the frontal sinus shaping the bridge [a very observable point]; the nostrils full, the brow rounded and prominent, and the line of the jaw angular and marked, while still uncovered with beard [the angularity departed or diminished with advancing years]. His shoulders were not square, but yet fairly masculine in shape. The singularity of gait depended upon the width of hip, which was unusual. Altogether he was a lightly built man [later on he was often decidedly but varyingly fat], with delicate hands and feet: although neither weak nor fragile in constitution, he was nevertheless altogether unaffected by any athletic exercises. He was careless in his dress, which then was, as usual with professional men, black and of evening cut [this matter of black evening dress altered very soon; and indeed, from 1851 or thereabouts, my brother ceased to be, in any noticeable way, careless or odd in attire, and at times was even rather particular about it]. So superior

was he to the ordinary vanities of young men that he would allow the spots of mud to remain dry on his legs for several days. His overcoat was brown, and not put on with ordinary attention; and, with his pushing stride and loud voice [I feel some doubt as to the *loud* voice—should call it emphatic and full-toned rather than loud], a special scrutiny would have been needed to discern the reserved tenderness that dwelt in the breast of the apparently careless and defiant youth. But any one who approached and addressed him was struck with sudden surprise to find all his critical impressions dissipated in a moment; for the language of the painter was refined and polished, and he proved to be courteous, gentle, and winsome, generous in compliment, rich in interest in the pursuit of others, and in every respect, so far as could be shown by manner, a cultivated gentleman. . . . In these early days, with all his headstrongness and a certain want of consideration, his life within was untainted to an exemplary degree, and he worthily rejoiced in the poetic atmosphere of the sacred and spiritual dreams that then encircled him, however some of his noisy demonstrations at the time might hinder this from being recognized by a hasty judgment."

Mr. Stephens, quoting from "a fellow-student," says that—

"Fame of a sort had preceded" Rossetti from Cary's to the Academy School. Other Caryites had talked of him "as a poet whose verses had been actually printed [this can only mean *Sir Hugh the Heron*], and as a clever sketcher of chivalric and satiric subjects, who in addition did all sorts of things in all sorts of unconventional ways. His rather high cheek-bones were the more observable because his cheeks were roseless and hollow enough to indicate the waste of life and midnight oil to which the youth was addicted." He, on his first appearance in the Academy School, "came forward among his fellows with a jerky step, tossed the falling hair back from his face, and, having both hands in his pockets, faced the student-world with an *insouciant* air which savoured of defiance, mental pride, and thorough self-reliance."

The reference here to "waste of midnight oil" is quite true. My brother had already acquired habits, which stuck to him through life, of not going to bed until he happened to be so disposed, often at two or three in the morning, and

of not getting up until necessity compelled or fancy suggested. "Always wilful, never methodical, and the consequences to take care of themselves," might have been his motto. It is true, however, that in mature life he settled down into habits of the utmost day-by-day regularity in professional work.

Rossetti went a great deal to the theatre towards 1845, and for some six or seven years ensuing, and again about 1861; little at other dates, and after 1868 or so not at all. He liked—in its way—almost any theatre, and almost any piece that was either genuinely poetical, or exciting, or entertaining; nothing of a dull or stuck-up kind. Miss Woolgar (Mrs Mellon) at the Adelphi, and afterwards Miss Glyn at Sadler's Wells, were two of his favourite actresses. If Shakespear or John Webster was not "going," an Adelphi drama by Buckstone or a burlesque of the Forty Thieves would do perfectly well. He was also much amused at thoroughly *bad* drama and acting, such as could be seen at the Queen's Theatre near Tottenham Court Road (afterwards Prince of Wales's Theatre).

## X.

## STUDENT-LIFE—SKETCHING, READING, AND WRITING.

As we have just seen, Dante Rossetti was known at Cary's Academy for sketching "chivalric and satiric subjects." There must have been great numbers of these, proper both to the Cary period and to the Royal Academy period. Possibly some still exist, in the hands of his companions of those days; I myself know of but few. There is nothing in them tending to what we call Præraphælitism.

The early letters of Rossetti show that no artist delighted him more intensely than Gavarni (Guillaume Sulpice Chevalier), the French designer for lithographs and woodcuts. Among his series are *Les Artistes*, *Les Coulisses*, *Le Carnaval*, *Les Enfants Terribles*, *Les Étudiants de Paris*, *Les Lorettes*, *Fourberies de Femmes en matière de Sentiment* etc. He was a designer of supreme facility, with much of elegance and

*esprit*, and in his way a master; but naturally the way does not tend towards anything castigated or ideal. It will be observed in the Letters that in 1843 and 1844 my brother spent some time in Boulogne with the Maenza family. This served to fix his attention still further upon Gavarni and other French designers of a vivacious and picturesque kind; though not wholly to the exclusion of British artists, among whom he greatly (and indeed permanently) admired Sir John Gilbert as a woodcut-draughtsman, and soon afterwards as a painter. In some pen-and-ink designs by Dante Rossetti, of the close of 1844 and on to September 1846, I trace much of what he saw in Gavarni, and tried to reproduce in his own practice. They are sketchy, and rather rough or unrefined in execution, but not wanting in spirit—the work now of an artist, though only of an artist at the beginning of his career. One is termed *Quartier Latin, the Modern Raphael and his Fornarina*. To April 1846 belongs a half-figure of Mephistopheles at the door of Gretchen's cell. The malignant expression is telling. Undated, but belonging I suppose to 1847, is a drawing, clever in its way, of a man seated, and reaching towards a flitting ghost; two other figures are evidently unconscious of the apparition. *Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament*, from *Percy's Reliques*, is a drawing, not fully completed, of some sentiment and some picturesqueness. At one time, I suppose 1845, he tried his hand at lithographing, and produced a figure of Juliette, from Frédéric Soulié's novel (a prime favourite with him in these days) *Les Mémoires du Diable*. This is poor enough, yet not destitute of a certain *chique*. He also lithographed a set of humorous playing-cards—Ireland as the Queen of Clubs, Shakespear as the King of Hearts, Death as the King of Spades, etc. They have some fancy and point, with pleasing arrangement here and there, and might perhaps have been popular if published. He thought of trying for a publisher, but I doubt whether he ever took any practical steps for this end. Death is represented as a Grave-digger, wearing a pair of baggy breeches, and standing in a grave. One sees only a part of

his leg-bones. These may perhaps be meant for his thigh-bones; but it seems quite as likely that they are intended for the bones of the lower leg. If so, it is worthy of remark that Rossetti gave this skeleton only one bone to each of his lower legs, instead of the normal two, and his anatomical knowledge could thus have been small indeed towards 1845. Strange to say, Holbein, in his *Dance of Death*, knew no better. Of more present interest is an illustrated copy of the little privately-printed volume, *Verses by Christina G. Rossetti*, 1847. I possess the copy of this volume bearing the inscriptions, "Frances Mary Lavinia Rossetti, from her loving daughter Christina, 24 July 1854," and then "Fratrī Soror, C.G.R., Sept. 25, 1890" (my sixty-first birthday). It contains five pencil drawings by Dante, all of them produced, I should say, before the year 1847 had closed. The frontispiece is a profile portrait of Christina, carefully and delicately done. The illustrations are to the poems, *A Ruined Cross*, *Tasso and Leonora*, *The Dream*, and *Lady Isabella* (who was Lady Isabella Howard, a daughter of the Earl of Wicklow, and a pupil of our Aunt Charlotte Polidori). These designs, though inferior to the portrait, are also handled with nicety and good taste. The last-named must have been produced a little later than the others, as it is not bound into the volume. A noteworthy point about the designs is the total absence of any feeling for costume. There are clothes, but of that nondescript kind which, in the male figures, is evidenced by little more than a slight line at the throat, and two others at the wrists. Tasso and Leonora might be anybody or nobody.

Before Præraphælitism came at all into question my brother began an oil-picture of good dimensions. It was named *Retro me Sathana*, and formed a group of three mediæval-costumed figures—an aged churchman and a youthful lady, and the devil slinking behind them baffled. He was a human being with a tail. This must have been undertaken in 1847, when my brother had no practice with pigments, and was continued for some three or four months. It was not, I

apprehend, altogether amiss; at what date it was destroyed I hardly know. He had begun the colouring, and showed the work privately to Sir Charles Eastlake, who did not encourage him to proceed with any such subject. Soon after this it was abandoned.

Rossetti's taste for reading, in all the days of his youth, was never stationary; it continued shifting and developing. Having drunk deep of one author, he went on to another. In 1844 some one told him that there was another poet of the Byronic epoch, Shelley, even greater than Byron. He bought a small pirated Shelley, and surged through its pages like a flame. I do not think that he ever afterwards read much of Byron; although, as his mind matured, he was not inclined to allow that the poet of such an actuality as *Don Juan* could be deemed inferior to the poet of such a vision as *Prometheus Unbound*. (Not indeed that he *approved* of *Don Juan*, as regards the spirit in which it is written. Early in 1880 he went so far as to tell me that he considered it a truly immoral and harmful book.) Keats followed not long after Shelley, in 1846, or perhaps 1845. My brother considered himself to have been one of the earliest strenuous admirers of Keats, but this can only be correct in a certain sense. The Old British Ballads and Mrs. Browning were read with endless enjoyment; also Alfred de Musset (I have previously mentioned Victor Hugo), Dumas (dramas, and afterwards novels), Tennyson, Edgar Poe, Coleridge, Blake, Sir Henry Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde*, Thomas Hood—more especially some of his serious poems, such as *Lycus the Centaur* and *The Haunted House*, and the semi-serious *Miss Killmansegg and her Precious Leg*, though some of his roaring jocularities were also much in favour. As to Dr. Hake's nebulous but impressive romance, *Vates*, some details will appear elsewhere. Hoffmann's *Contes Fantastiques* (in French), and in English Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl*, and Lamotte-Fouqué's *Undine* and other stories, represented the Teutonic element in romance and legend. It may have been towards 1846 that my brother came upon the prose *Stories after Nature* of Charles Wells, and his poetic



drama of *Joseph and his Brethren*. These works, already half-forgotten at that date, were enormously admired by Rossetti, and the ultimate outcome of his admiration, transfused through the potent faculty and pen of Mr. Swinburne, was the republication of the drama about 1877. Earlier than most of these—beginning, I suppose, in 1844—was the Irish romancist Maturin, who held Dante Rossetti spellbound with the gloomy and thrilling horrors of *Melmoth the Wanderer*. He and I used often to sit far into the night reading the pages one over the other's shoulder; and, if to stir the imagination of an imaginative youth is one aim of such a romance as *Melmoth*, no author can ever have succeeded more manifestly than Maturin with Dante Rossetti. There was another grim romance of his, named *Montorio*, which we thought a splendid pendant to *Melmoth*; not to speak of *Women*, *The Wild Irish Boy*, and *The Albigenses*; Maturin's once-celebrated verse-drama of *Bertram*, and some other poems of his, were eagerly inspected, but without any genuine result to correspond. Two other English novels which he read in these years with keen enjoyment were the *Tristram Shandy* of Sterne, and the *Richard Savage* of Charles Whitehead; and in French, by Reybaud, *Jérôme Paturot à la recherche d'une Position Sociale*, and, by Eugène Sue, the *Mystères de Paris*, the *Juif Errant*, and *Mathilde*. In Dickens my brother's interest may have been on the wane when *Dombey and Son* began in 1846, though I suppose he also read *David Copperfield*, 1849. In his last days he was much struck with the *Tale of Two Cities*. To Dickens succeeded Thackeray, who was most highly appreciated: his early tales in *Fraser's Magazine*, such as *Fitzboodle's Confessions* and *Barry Lyndon*, and *The Paris Sketchbook* (even before *Vanity Fair* appeared in 1846), also *The Book of Snobs*. Later on, a novel ascribed to Lady Malet, *Violet or the Dausense*, was a great favourite; and he had a positive passion for Meinhold's wondrous *Sidonia the Sorceress* (translated), which he much preferred to the *Amber Witch* of the same phenomenal author.

At last—it may have been in 1847—everything took a

secondary place in comparison with Robert Browning. *Paracelsus*, *Sordello*, *Pippa Passes*, *The Blot on the Scutcheon*, and the short poems in the *Bells and Pomegranates* series, were endless delights; endless were the readings, and endless the recitations. Allowing for a labyrinthine passage here and there, Rossetti never seemed to find this poet difficult to understand; he discerned in him plenty of sonorous rhythmical effect, and revelled in what, to some other readers, was mere crabbedness. Confronted with Browning, all else seemed pale and in neutral tint. Here were passion, observation, aspiration, mediævalism, the dramatic perception of character, act, and incident. In short, if at this date Rossetti had been accomplished in the art of painting, he would have carried out in that art very much the same range of subject and treatment which he found in Browning's poetry; and it speaks something for his originality and self-respecting independence that, when it came to verse-writing, he never based himself upon Browning to any appreciable extent, and for the most part pursued a wholly diverse path. It should not be supposed that, in glorifying Browning, Rossetti slighted other poets previously the objects of his homage. He valued them at the same rate as before, though he thought Browning a step further in advance. I need scarcely add that Shakespear and Dante are to be excepted, for at no time would he have denied or contested the superiority of these, even to the poet of *Sordello*. The time of Dante had come some three years before that of Browning began, and the current of Rossetti's love for the Florentine flowed wider and deeper month by month.

It may be noted that (as in a previous instance) I have not specified any books of a so-called solid kind—history, biography, or voyages. Science and metaphysics were totally out of Rossetti's ken. I do not believe that he read any such books at this period—very few at any later period, among the few *Boswell's Johnson* holding a high place. In current talk Rossetti did not appear to be much behind other persons when history or biography was referred to; but I hardly

know what historical volumes he opened, other than Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Merivale's *Roman Empire*, and something of Plutarch and of Gibbon. The great Duke of Marlborough's English History came out of Shakespear's plays; Rossetti's English and other history derived largely from the same source, supplemented by those adust chroniclers, Walter Scott, Bulwer, Victor Hugo, and Dumas. This was not to our father's liking. I have more than once heard him say, "When you have read a novel of Walter Scott, what do you know? The fancies of Walter Scott."

Rossetti had commenced some prose story before he left King's College School in the summer of 1842. I am not certain whether that story was or was not the same thing as *Sorrentino*. At any rate, a prose tale named *Sorrentino* was in course of composition in August 1843. I remember something of it, but not in clear detail. The Devil (a personage of great predilection with my brother ever since his early acquaintance with Göthe's *Faust*, which drama he read and re-read afterwards in Filmore's translation) was a principal character. There was a love-story, in the course of which the Devil interfered in a very exasperating way between the lover and his fair one. He either personated the lover, or conjured-up a phantom of the lady, and made love to her, and was seen by the lover in the act—or something of this kind. There was also a duel in which he intermixed. Rossetti wrote some four or five chapters of this story, on the scale of chapters in an ordinary novel, and he contemplated offering *Sorrentino* for publication. Finally he abandoned it, and I dare say he had destroyed the MS. before he was of age. I have always rather regretted the disappearance of *Sorrentino*. To my boyish notion, it was spirited, effective, and well told; and I fancy that, were it extant, it would be found by far better than his previous small literary attempts. That he entered fully into the spirit of a story of *diablerie* is certain; and, having by this time some moderate command over his pen, he may have been not incapable of doing something in that line himself.

His next literary incentive arose out of his German studies --which began, as already mentioned, towards the earlier part of 1842. Dr. Heimann brought him so far on in German that Dante Rossetti made a verse-translation of Bürger's *Lenore*, perhaps in 1844. This likewise has perished. I suppose it was much on a par with most other versions of the ballad. I can recollect two stanzas (and might, were there a little prompting, recollect others as well), one close to the beginning of the poem, and the other at its end:—

"The Empress and the King,  
With ceaseless quarrel tired,  
At length relaxed the stubborn hate  
Which rivalry inspired."

And

"Patience, patience, while thy heart is breaking—  
With thy God there is no question-making;  
Of thy body thou art quit and free—  
Heaven keep thy soul eternally!"

From *Lenore* he proceeded to a more ambitious adventure --no less than a translation of the *Nibelungenlied*. This mighty old poem seized hold upon him with a vice-like clench; yet I do not suppose he ever read the whole of it, his knowledge of German, unaided, being hardly sufficient for such an effort. Neureuther's illustrated edition, combined with Dr. Heimann's explanations, showed him the course of the narrative. The translation was begun in October 1845, and went on to the end of the 5th Geste, or thereabouts, where Siegfried first sees Kriemhild. No trace of it remains. Speaking from long-past memory, I should say that this was really a fine translation, with rolling march and a sense of the heroic. The merits of the next translation are not matter of conjecture, for it got finally printed in Rossetti's *Collected Works*, 1886. It is from the *Arme Heinrich* of the twelfth-century poet Hartmann von Aue, and belongs probably to the year 1846. For simplicity, vigour, perception of the character of the original, and tact in conveying this along

with a certain heightened and spontaneous colouring of his own, this version could not easily be excelled. My brother put some finishing touches to the translation in 1871. Probably he cut out some juvenilities, but it remains substantially and essentially the performance of his adolescence.

Even before the *Arme Heinrich* Rossetti's translations from the early Italian poets must have begun. The dates of most of these range from 1845 to 1849. Glowing from the flame-breath of Dante Alighieri, Dante Rossetti made continual incursions into the Old Reading-room of the British Museum, hunting up volumes of the most ancient Italian lyrists, and also volumes of modern British poets, and maybe of French as well. No doubt this pursuit involved some partial neglect of his artistic studies. When he found an Italian poem that pleased him he set-to at translating it. He had soon got together a good deal of material, and gradually the idea of collecting all into a book, including a version of Dante's *Vita Nuova*, grew into shape. Almost all the translations from Dante may have been done at home, where of course the youth had ready access to his writings, and to those of several other old Italians. I cannot say which branch of the subject may have been undertaken first; possibly the version of the *Vita Nuova*, prose and poetry, had been made before any researches at the British Museum commenced. This version was shown in November 1850 to Tennyson, with whom my brother and others of our circle had made some acquaintance through Mr. Coventry Patmore. He returned the MS., saying that it was very strong and earnest, but disfigured by some cockney rhymes, such as "calm" and "arm." Rossetti at once determined to remove these. The book of *The Early Italian Poets* did not appear in print until 1861, and meanwhile my brother had often gone over his first MSS., revising, improving, and suppressing crudities or quaintnesses. Still (as in the case of the *Arme Heinrich*) the published translations are, in main essentials, the same which Rossetti wrote down in these juvenile years—the impulse and the savour of them are the same; and any praise

deserved by and awarded to the man who issued the book in 1861 appertains rightfully to the youth who worked upon it in 1845 and the few following years. The translations have been very generally recognized as first-class work of their order—re-castings of poems into another language such as could only be accomplished by a poet in his own right. Instead of expressing any opinion of my own, I will reproduce two verdicts by writers of exceptional competence from their respective standpoints. Mr. Swinburne, the most lavishly generous of critics when he finds something that he can have the luxury of praising, says in that review of the *Poems* of Rossetti which he published in 1870: "All Mr. Rossetti's translations bear the same evidence of a power not merely beyond reach but beyond attempt of other artists in language." My other authority is Signor Carlo Placchi of Florence, who, immediately after Rossetti's death in 1882, produced a brochure entitled *Dante Gabriele Rossetti*. The testimony of a native Italian well versed in English may carry with it a weight hardly inferior to that of the greatest contemporary master of English verse. I quote it with the more pleasure as it does justice also to Mr. Swinburne's own powers as a translator:—

"The collection of the Poets of Italy of the first centuries is a work undoubtedly extraordinary. The diverse styles, the opposite turns of sentiment, the various and complicated forms, the difficult allegories, the intricate rhymes, all is rendered in a surprising way; and the very spirit of our language seems reflected, with all its poetry and its pictorial aspect, in these translations—which certainly do not yield to the best version of a foreign poet done in our days, I mean that of Villon executed by Swinburne. Like him, Rossetti has been able not only to enter into that life so different from the English, and steal the spark proper to another idiom, in such wise as to astound even those who know the original thoroughly; but, preserving all the grace and elegance and candour of his model, he has sought, and successfully, to re-fashion, without visible effort, their metres and repeated rhymes, and all the devices of alliteration, assonance, and repetition, which are certainly not less difficult in

Rossetti's faculty was fully developed by 1847. One proof of his suffices—that he wrote *The Blessed Damozel* before 12 May of that year, or while still in the nineteenth year of his age. By saying that his faculty was now fully developed, I do not mean to imply that it did not afterwards ripen—which surely it did—in several important respects; but that he had now ideas of a memorable kind to express, and could and did express them in verse wholly adequate for their embodiment. He meant something good—he knew what he meant—and he knew how to convey it to others. *The Blessed Damozel* was written with a view to its insertion in a F.S. Family-magazine, of brief vitality. In 1881 Rossetti gave Mr. Caine an account of its origin, as deriving from his enthusiasm and admiration of Edgar Poe's *Raven*. "I saw" (this is Mr. Caine's version of Rossetti's statement) "that Poe had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and I determined to reverse the conditions, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven." Along with *The Raven*, other poems by Poe—*Utalume*, *For Annie*, *The Haunted Palace*, and many another—were a deep well of delight to Rossetti in all these years. He once wrote a parody of *Utalume*. I do not rightly remember it, nor has it left a vestige behind.

The poem named *My Sister's Sleep* was, I think, even earlier than *The Blessed Damozel*; *The Portrait* and *Ave* very little later, also all the opening portion of *Dante at Verona*, *Last Confession*, and *The Bride's Prelude*. *Jenny* (in its first form, which had none of that slight framework of incident now belonging to the poem) was begun almost as soon as *The Blessed Damozel*; only some fifty lines of the original draft are retained. The sonnet *Retro me Sathana*

must belong to 1847, being intended to pair with his picture of the same name ; and the trio of sonnets named *The Choice* appertain to the same year, or perhaps to an early date in 1848. This trio is important, as indicating Rossetti's youthful conception of life as a moral discipline and problem. He propounds three theories—1, Eat thou and drink, to-morrow thou shalt die ; 2, Watch thou and pray ; 3, Think thou and act. Each sonnet exhibits its own theme, without any direct reference to the themes of the other two. It is manifest, however, that Rossetti intends us to set aside the "Eat thou and drink" theory of life, and not to accept, without much reservation, the "Watch thou and pray" theory. "Think thou and act" is what he abides by.

There was another very early poem, begun perhaps in 1846 rather than 1847, and nearly completed at the time. It then remained wholly neglected, until, on his deathbed, my brother took it up, and supplied the finishing touches. Its final name is *Jan van Hunks*. For this long ballad-poem Rossetti found his main subject (but by no means all his incidents) in a prose story, *Henkerwyssel's Challenge*, printed in his old favourite, the *Tales of Chivalry*. The ballad relates how a Dutchman, celebrated for his prowess in smoking, treated certain members of his family with callous cruelty, and was then challenged by the Devil in human form to engage in a smoking-duel. Of course the Devil's capabilities at such an exercise exceeded even the Dutchman's ; so Van Hunks, dying of over-smoking, was marched off to hell, where his carcass was converted into a pipe for the devil's accustomed use. The ballad is humorously grim, treated with great force and no compromise, and is a pleasant piece of unpleasant reading. It is most fully deserving of publication ; but has not been included in Rossetti's *Collected Works*, because he gave the MS. to his devoted friend Mr. Theodore Watts, with whom alone now rests the decision of presenting it or not to the public.

I may mention yet another "copy of verses," belonging to March 1848. It is named *The English Revolution of 1848*,



and ridicules the street-spoutings of Chartists and others in that year of vast continental upheavals. It is more than tolerably good in its burlesque way, but is not likely to be published. My brother had some feeling for political ideals and great movements, but none, except one of annoyance and disdain, for noise and bluster. It may well be that he did not always appreciate correctly the distinction between the noise and the ideals.

A small incident, of literary and artistic bearing, proved to be hardly less important in Rossetti's career than the composition of an original poem. He was already a hearty admirer of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. One day, while attending at the British Museum Reading-room on one of his ordinary errands, he received, from an attendant named Palmer, the offer of a MS. book by Blake, crammed with prose and verse, and with designs. This was in April 1847. The price asked was ten shillings. Dante's pockets were in their normal state of depletion, so he applied to me, urging that so brilliant an opportunity should not be let slip, and I produced the required coin. He then proceeded to copy out, across a confused tangle of false starts, alternative forms, and cancellings, all the poetry in the book, and I did the like for the prose. His ownership of this truly precious volume certainly stimulated in some degree his disregard or scorn of some aspects of art held in reverence by *dilettanti* and routine-students, and thus conduced to the Pre-Raphaelite movement; for he found here the most outspoken (and no doubt, in a sense, the most irrational) epigrams and jeers against such painters as Correggio, Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, Reynolds, and Gainsborough—any men whom Blake regarded as fulsomely florid, or lax, or swamping ideas in mere manipulation. These were balsam to Rossetti's soul, and grist to his mill. The volume was moreover the origin of all his after-concern in Blake literature; as Alexander Gilchrist, when preparing the *Life of Blake* published in 1863, got to hear of the MS. book, which my brother then entrusted to him, and, after Gilchrist's premature death, Rossetti did a

good deal towards completing certain parts of the biography, and in especial edited all the poems introduced into the second Section. He again did something for the re-edition dated 1880. At the sale of my brother's library and effects the Blake MS. sold for £110. 5s., so that the venture of ten shillings turned out a pretty good investment.

## XI.

*FRIENDS TOWARDS 1847*

BESIDES the families which I have already mentioned—Dr. Heilmann and his wife, a very pretty pleasant young English Jewess, whose maiden name was Amelia Barnard, and the American Doughtys—Dante Rossetti knew, as he grew up towards manhood, two persons more particularly, of whom I ought here to give some account. They were Major Calder Campbell and Mr. William Bell Scott.

To Major Campbell Rossetti was, I think, introduced by an affectionate friend, a year or two older than himself, the sculptor Alexander Munro—an Inverness man who had come to London under the patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, and who, being ingenuous and agreeable in manner, and of graceful gift as a sculptor, made some way both in society and in art. He died abroad towards the beginning of 1871. Calder Campbell was a retired officer from the Indian army, a bachelor turned of fifty. He took to my brother most heartily; was a firm believer in his future, and watched with the kindest interest his actual stage of development. He was the author of a large number of verses, tales, and sketches, in *Annuals* and other fleeting forms of publication, and from time to time produced a volume as well. To pretend that he was an author of high mark, or capable of something greatly better than what he gave forth, would be futile; but he was a lively writer in a minor way, an amusing chatty talker, who had seen many things here and there, and knew something of the publishing

world, and a straightforward, most unassuming gentleman, whose society could do nothing but good to a youth like Rossetti. For a couple of years or so my brother and I used to pass an evening weekly at his lodgings in University Street, Tottenham Court Road. Tea, literature, and a spice of bantering scandal, were the ingredients for a light-hearted and not unimproving colloquy. Mostly no one else was present. On one occasion—to please Dante Rossetti, who took a great deal of interest in a rather eccentric but certainly able volume of poems entitled *Studies of Sensation and Event*—Major Campbell secured the attendance of its author, Ebenezer Jones. He was a well-grown, thin, pale man, still young, with decayed teeth and a general air of shaky health, which brought him to his grave before many years had passed. He seemed pleased in a way, but without any ease of manner or flow of spirits. We never saw him again. Dante did not, however, lose his interest in Ebenezer Jones. As late as February 1870 he made some emphatic observations upon this poet in *Notes and Queries*; and his remarks led ultimately to a re-publication of the *Studies*, and to a good deal of printed matter about Jones in the *Athenæum*.

Rossetti was quite inclined now to make a little way in the literary world, if he could find an opening. Major Campbell was more than willing to assist him, and he showed *My Sister's Sleep* to the editress of the *Belle Assemblée*, a philandering magazine which had seen better days. The editress expressed great admiration of the poem, but did not publish it. Perhaps payment was wanted, and funds were at a low ebb. This may have been before the year 1848 was far advanced. I cannot recollect that my brother made any further endeavour for publication. Pretty soon *The Germ* was projected, and was to be the medium for introducing to the public the writings of himself and others.

Mr. Bell Scott has narrated (*Autobiographical Notes*) the origin of his acquaintance with Dante Rossetti. On 25 November 1847 the latter took the first step by sending to Mr. Scott, then Master of the Government School of

Design in Newcastle-on-Tyne, a letter of which the Autobiographist gives an abstract. I condense still further.

"A few years ago," said Rossetti, "I met for the first time, in a publication called *The Story-teller*, with your two poems, *Rosabell* and *A Dream of Love*. So beautiful, so original, did they appear to me, that I assure you I could think of little else for several days; and I became possessed by quite a troublesome anxiety to know what else you had written, and where it was to be found. Seeing that the two poems were extracted from *The Monthly Repository*, I went to the Museum, where I found a set of that magazine, but met only with a paper on Art. . . . At the beginning of the present year I fell in with a most inadequate paragraph, in the *Art-Union Journal*, which informed me of the publication of *The Year of the World*. I was about to bid you imagine my delight, but that would not be easy. I rushed from my friend's house where I had seen the announcement (for the wretched thing was no more), and, having got the book, fell upon it like a vulture. You may be pretty certain that you had in me one of those readers who read the volume at a single sitting. A finer, a more dignitous,<sup>1</sup> a more deeply thoughtful production, a work that is more truly a *work*, has seldom indeed shed its light upon me. To me I can truly say that it revealed

'Some depth unknown, some inner life unlived.'

This is the first line of *The Year of the World*.—Rossetti proceeded to say that he was aware of the existence of another poem by Scott named *Hades or the Transit*; and, being unable to light upon this or other works by the same author, he ventured to enquire at headquarters.

It may be questioned whether readers of the present day know very much about Mr. Scott's poems. I will therefore say a few words about *Rosabell* and *The Year of the World*. *Rosabell*—afterwards reissued under the name of *Mary Anne*—is a poem, in irregular form and various metres, about an innocent country-girl who becomes a gentleman's mistress,

<sup>1</sup> So in Mr. Scott's book. My brother was not fond of such strained or affected words, and was much more likely to write "dignified." Still I suppose that the printed word is correct, and that he was misled for a moment by the analogy of the Italian adjective *dignitoso*.

and finally sinks into the lowest depths of shame and destitution. Though deficient in some executive respects, it reads an impressive lesson in impressive and poignant terms, and deserves to live. *The Year of the World* is a much longer poem in blank verse. The subject extends (to use the author's own words) "from the golden age of the Garden of Eden, the period of instinct and innocence, to the end of the race, when, all the adverse powers of Nature subjugated, Man will have attained a happy and quiescent immortality." I have read this ambitious and remarkable poem several times, but not of late years. I will, however, undertake to say that it contains a large amount of strong thought mixed with ideal aspiration; that it comprises many lines of true poetry, and many passages of majestic scope; and that, if a reading public who do not greatly want such productions would consent to read the work, they would find in it much to reward their pains, and to uphold the claims of its author as a poet of a high standard, and of some veritable though not uniformly realized attainment. I do not coincide with some critics of the present day (and of past days as well) who hold that Scott's executive touch is so uncertain, and the instances where he falls short of his aim so numerous, as to disentitle him altogether to the name of poet. On the contrary, I can and do still admire his work to a large extent, although far from unconscious of its too frequently obvious, and sometimes almost unaccountable, blemishes.

Mr. Scott, now aged thirty-six, naturally had not the least idea who "Gabriel Charles Rossetti" might be, beyond what appeared in his letter as to his being a student of painting, etc. He made some sort of reply, and soon received a further letter enclosing a number of verse MSS., which included *The Blessed Damozel*, *My Sister's Sleep*, and (as Scott expresses it) "many other admirable poems, marshalled under the title of *Songs of the Art Catholic*." I hardly think that my brother had by this date completed "many" poems, unless translations are to be reckoned in. There may easily, however, have been a round half dozen of original composi-

tions, comprising, in all probability, *Ave*—also the beginnings of some others, such as *The Bride's Prelude* (which at this time was called *Bride-Chamber Talk*). My brother's general title of *Songs of the Art Catholic* is worth a moment's attention. By "Art" he decidedly meant something more than "*poetic art*." He meant to suggest that the poems embodied conceptions and a point of view related to pictorial art—also that this art was, in sentiment though not necessarily in dogma, Catholic—medæval and un-modern. He never was, and never affected to be, a Roman-catholic, nor yet an Anglican-catholic. All the then excited debates concerning "Puseyism," Tractarianism, and afterwards Ritualism, passed by him like the idle wind. If he knew anything about "the Gorham Controversy," it was only that Carlyle coupled "prevenient grace" with "supervenient moonshine." Indeed, by this date—so far as opinion went, which is a very different thing from sentiment and traditional bias—he was already a decided sceptic. He was never confirmed, professed no religious faith, and practised no regular religious observances; but he had (more especially two or three years after this) sufficient sympathy with the abstract ideas and the venerable forms of Christianity to go occasionally to an Anglican church—very occasionally, and only as the inclination ruled him.

Not long after this letter-writing (I have already expressed the opinion that it was about the new year of 1848) Mr. Scott called in 50 Charlotte Street, and saw Dante and other members of the family. I well remember his first appearance, in the evening. He was then a handsome and highly impressive-looking man; of good stature, bony and well-developed but rather thin frame, pondering and somewhat melancholy air, and deliberate low-toned utterance. His hair (which he lost entirely some years afterwards) was blackish, and of free abundant growth, his eyebrows bushy, his eyes of a very pale clear blue. This hue must have been too cold and steely for a southern sympathy; for, when he and I were travelling in Italy in 1862, a Pisan female fellow-

traveller felt disconcerted under its influence, and whispered to me that he certainly had "the evil eye." We in Charlotte Street did not think so, but took very warmly indeed to Mr. Scott, and found him not only attractive but even fascinating.

Some time after he had written to Mr. Scott—it seems to have been in the summer of 1850—Dante Rossetti wrote likewise to Robert Browning. In the British Museum he had come across an anonymous poem entitled *Pauline*. He admired it much, and copied out every line of it. He observed one or two verses which he already knew in Browning's avowed poems. From this circumstance, and from general internal evidence, he came to the conclusion that the author of *Pauline* could be no other than Browning, and he wrote to the poet at a venture to enquire whether his inference was correct. Browning was at that time in Venice. He replied in the affirmative; and, being two years afterwards back in London, he made the acquaintance of Rossetti, who called upon him companioned by the poet William Allingham.

## XII.

### MADDOX BROWN, HOLMAN HUNT, MILLAIS.

A CERTAIN day in March 1848—I don't know *which* day—formed one of the most important landmarks in the career of Dante Rossetti. It was on that day that he wrote to Mr. Ford Maddox Brown, personally quite unknown to him, asking whether he could become Brown's pupil in the practical work of painting. He thus commenced the most intimate friendship of his life; and the letter led on to his familiar companionship with Holman Hunt, and hence to the Præraphaelite movement, and all subsequent developments of his art.

It may be questioned—Why did Rossetti look out for private instruction in painting, when he might, with moderate exertion, have advanced from the Antique School of the Royal Academy to the Life School and the Painting School, and might, in the last-named section, have obtained, from

accredited painters, all the training that he could want? My recollections on this point do not supply me with any very precise information. Some *data* are however clear enough to me. Few young men were more impetuous or more impatient than my brother, or more ambitious to boot. He had now been an art-student for nearly six years, and he wanted to be a student no longer, but a practising painter, testing by actual performance the faculty that was within him, and the recognition which the public might be willing or compelled to accord thereto. His study in the Academy's Antique School had not yet lasted two years. Fully as much might still be needed before he would get into the Painting School, and, when there, he might find little to respect in his instructors (for he had no belief in an R.A., merely as such), and little furtherance in that particular line of work which attracted him. He had plenty of ideas. What he needed was such an immediate knowledge of brush-work as would enable him to cover a canvas. I do not say—to cover it well or ill; for the idea of doing the thing ill would at this time, as at all others, have been most repugnant to him. He wanted to cover the canvas, and to do it as well as his utmost endeavour would permit. These considerations were amply sufficient to impel him to look out for a prompt training in painting elsewhere than by the graduated processes of the Royal Academy. As he was not yet twenty years of age, it could not be held that he was at all belated, if only now he could make a real beginning.

The letter to Mr. Brown is so important from all points of view that I think well to transcribe it here verbatim.

"March 1848.

"50 CHARLOTTE STREET, PORTLAND PLACE.

"SIR,—

"I am a student in the Antique School of the Royal Academy. Since the first time I ever went to an exhibition (which was several years ago, and when I saw a picture of yours from Byron's *Giaour*) I have always listened with avidity if your name happened to be mentioned, and rushed first of all to your number in the Catalogue.



The *Parisina*, the *Study in the Manner of the Early Masters*, *Our Lady of Saturday-night*, and the other glorious works you have exhibited, have successively raised my admiration, and kept me standing on the same spot for fabulous lengths of time. The outline from your *Abstract Representation of Justice* which appeared in one of the Illustrated Papers constitutes, together with an engraving after that great painter Von Holst,<sup>1</sup> the sole pictorial adornment of my room [this was a room, originally our father's dressing-room, quite at the top of the house 50 Charlotte Street. Small and bare and uncared-for it was, but how many hours, which in retrospect seem glorious hours, have I not passed in it with my brother! how many books have we not read to one another, how many *bouts-rimés* sonnets have we not written, over its scanty fireplace!]. And, as for the *Mary Queen of Scots*, if ever I do anything in the art, it will certainly be attributable in a great degree to the constant study of that work [this was a very large painting, *The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots*, now in the possession of Mr. Boddington. My brother had seen it in the Pantheon Bazaar, where it hung for years rather than months].

"It is not therefore to be wondered at if, wishing to obtain some knowledge of colour (which I have as yet scarcely attempted), the hope suggests itself that you may possibly admit pupils to profit by your invaluable assistance. If, such being the case, you would do me the honour to inform me what your terms would be for six months' instruction, I feel convinced that I should then have some chance in the Art.

"I remain, Sir, very truly yours,

"GABRIEL C. ROSSETTI."

It is somewhat remarkable that, apart from his allusion to a print of the *Justice*, my brother did not here refer to Maddox Brown's three Cartoons in Westminster Hall—works which he assuredly and very rightly admired as much at least as any of the paintings specified, and more than most

<sup>1</sup> Von Holst is not much remembered now. He was an Anglo-German painter, greatly addicted to supernatural subjects, which he treated with imaginative impulse and considerable pictorial skill—*Lord Lyttelton and the Ghost*, *Faust and Mephistopheles in the Wine-cellar*, *The Death of Lady Macbeth*, etc. He died towards 1850, in early middle age.

of them. Apparently he dwelt on paintings alone, because his immediate object was to obtain guidance in the use of colour.

Mr. Brown, born on 16 April 1821, was close upon twenty-seven years of age when he received this letter, or about seven years older than Rossetti. He was a vigorous-looking young man, with a face full of insight and purpose; thick straight brown hair, fair skin, well-coloured visage, blueish eyes, broad brow, square and rather high shoulders, slow and distinct articulation. His face was good-looking as well as fine; but less decidedly handsome, I think, than it became towards the age of forty. As an old man—he died on 6 October 1893—he had a grand patriarchal aspect; his hair, of a pure white, being fully as abundant as when first I knew him, supplemented now by a long beard. Born in Calais of English parents, and brought up chiefly abroad, he was the sort of man who had no idea of being twitted without exacting the reason why. Such profuse praise as he now received from his unknown correspondent was what fortune had not accustomed him to, and he suspected that some ill-advised person was trying to make game of him. From his studio in Clipstone Street, very near Charlotte Street, he sallied forth with a stout stick in his hand. Knocking at No. 50, he would not give his name, nor proceed further than the passage. When Dante came down, Brown's enquiry was, "Is your name Rossetti, and is this your writing?" An affirmative being returned, the next question was, "What do you mean by it?" to which Rossetti rationally replied that he meant what he had written. Brown now perceived that after all the whole affair was *bond fide*; and (as the Family-letters show) he not only consented to put his neophyte in the right path of painting, but would entertain no offer of payment, and made Rossetti his friend on the spot—a friend for that day, in the spring of 1848, and a friend for life.

For these details I have relied chiefly on the book of Mr. Bell Scott, who relates the interview in the words (such they purport to be) of Rossetti himself in conversation with Scott.

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Mr. Stephens gives a similar though briefer narrative, on the authority of Brown's anecdotic discourse, which was often of a very amusing kind, and replete with minute particulars. For truth's sake I will say that I cannot remember having ever heard either Brown or my brother refer to these minor incidents of the stout stick, etc.; but I am bound to believe Mr. Scott and Mr. Stephens, and I do believe them.

After paying a visit or two to the studio of Maddox Brown—who was then engaged on his important picture of *Wieland and John of Gaunt* (or possibly it was *Cordelia watching the bedside of Lear*)—Rossetti was informed by his instructor that he should set to at copying a picture, and at painting some still-life—pickle-jars or bottles. According to Mr. Holman Hunt, he copied the picture (I have not the least recollection of what it was), but his aspiring soul chafed sorely against the pickle-jars. This, however reasonably enjoined by Mr. Brown, was the very sort of drudgery which, in applying to him, Rossetti had hoped to avoid. The pickle-jars were nevertheless painted. The study remained in the hands of Mr. Maddox Brown, and, at the sale which was held at his house in May 1894, it turned up, and was purchased by Mr. Herbert H. Gilchrist. My brother made also many original drawings or slight paintings under Brown's eye. These I no longer remember; but I have lately seen one, which is said to be the first of all, and which was presented by Brown, only a few days before his death, to the young lady who is now Mrs. Ford M. Hueffer. It is a drawing of long narrow shape, in body-colour barely a little tinted, with a plain gilt ground; and represents a young woman, auburn-haired, standing with joined hands. The face seems to be a reminiscence of Christina, but the nose is unduly long; the drapery is delicately felt and done, and the whole thing has a forecast of the "Præraphaelite" manner. Without being exactly good, the work shows distinct promise for a youth, almost a novice at handling the brush.

From the pickle-jars ensued the second stage in this pictorial progress, and the beginning of my brother's close

intimacy with Hunt, who was about thirteen months his senior. Just towards the date when Dante was getting adequately, or more than adequately, disgusted with his still-life probation, the annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy opened at the commencement of May. He saw there Hunt's picture—an uncommonly fine one for so youthful a painter—of *The Eve of St. Agnes* (escape of Madeline and Porphyro from the castle). He "came up boisterously" (says Mr. Hunt), "and in loud tongue made me feel very confused by declaring that mine was the best picture of the year." It seems that the like had occurred in 1847, when Hunt's exhibited picture was from Walter Scott's *Woodstock*. "Rossetti frankly asked me to let him call upon me." When he did call,<sup>1</sup> he bewailed the pickle-jars or bottles, and sounded Hunt as to whether he need do any more of them. Hunt, without detracting from the general correctness of Brown's scheme of training, opined that Rossetti might permit himself to select for painting some composition of his own, and might begin on the canvas with the still-life proper to such a composition; and then this accessory part of the subject would no longer be repulsive, for it would be the mere adjunct or preparation for the interesting part. No advice could possibly have been more reasonable, considering on the one hand the temperament and aspirations of Rossetti, and on the other his great inexperience in the use of pigment. Mr. Hunt recommended that he should at once select for his picture a design recently contributed to a Sketching Society, and approved by Millais. This design must have been either *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, from Keats, or the scene of *Gretchen in Church*, from *Faust*; in all probability the latter. The *Belle Dame* seems

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hunt says that the encounter at the Academy exhibition was on the opening day (first Monday in May), and the visit to his studio "in a few days more." Considering the date when the *Gretchen* design (mentioned by me in this context) was sent round and criticized, July 1848, and the date, 20 August, when Rossetti was finally settled with Hunt in a studio, I incline to think that the visit in question must have been about a couple of months later than the writer puts it.

to have passed out of observation, though I suppose not out of existence. At any rate, the *Gretchen* exists, and was exhibited in 1883 in the Burlington Club collection of my brother's works.

A word or two must be given to the Sketching Society here in question. It was termed the Cyclographic Society. Each member produced a design, and sent it round to colleagues in a portfolio, to be inspected and criticized. The members, besides Millais and Rossetti, were Hunt, John Hancock the sculptor, William Dennis, N. E. Green, J. T. Clifton, Walter Howell Deverell, J. B. Keene, T. Watkins, James Collinson, Richard Burchett, F. G. Stephens, Thomas Woolner, and J. A. Vinter. As Sir John Millais's criticism on the *Gretchen* is interesting on every ground, and especially in this connexion, I give it here :—

"A very clever and original design, beautifully executed. The figures which deserve the greatest attention are the four figures praying to the left. The young girl's face is very pretty, but the head is too large; the other three are full of piety. The Devil is in my opinion a mistake; his head wants drawing, and the horns through the cowl are commonplace, and therefore objectionable. The right arm of Margaret should have been shown, for, by hiding the Devil's right hand (which is not sufficiently prominent), you are impressed with the idea that he is tearing her to pieces for a meal. The drawing and composition of Margaret are original, and expressive of utter prostration. The greatest objection is the figure with his back towards you, who is unaccountably short; the pleasing group of lovers should have occupied his place. The girl and child in the foreground are exquisite in feeling, the flaming sword well introduced and highly emblematic of the subject, which is well chosen, and, with a few alterations in its treatment, should be painted. Chairs out of perspective."

I can easily believe this last item; for Rossetti never paid any attention, worth speaking of, to perspective, and indeed—so far as his own interest in matters of art was concerned—was at all times almost indifferent to the question whether

balanced tone of Milnes's remarks in all other respects. The Cyclographic Society did not last long, as may be gathered from Rossetti's letter of 30 August 1848. I think the more progressive artists among its members got tired of association with some others, and hastened its dissolution. I can remember attending one or two meetings of the Society; though why I was admitted—unless it be that Dante *sic voluit, sic jussit*—I fail to see.

At the interview of which I have been speaking Rossetti (according to Holman Hunt) gave the latter to understand that, being oppressed by the pickle-jars, he had written to Leigh Hunt (whom he did not know), submitting some of his poems, original and translated, for courteous perusal, and asking whether it might seem feasible for him to trust to literature rather than fine art as a profession. A copy of Leigh Hunt's letter in reply is still extant. The date (it will be perceived) is 31 March, and it was written "at length"—i.e., some good while after he had received the poems. Rossetti's letter to Brown was only sent at some date in March; and, looking to these dates, I rather question whether his communication to Leigh Hunt could have been consequent upon his affliction over the pickle-jars. Here is the veteran poet's very kind and considerate letter to a youth in all ways totally unknown :—

"KENSINGTON, March 31, 1848.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I have at length had the pleasure of reading your manuscripts, but am still forced to be very brief. I hope the agreeableness of my remarks will make amends for their shortness, since you have been good enough to constitute me a judge of powers of which you ought to have no doubt. I felt perplexed, it is true, at first, by





*By D. G. Rosselli.*

GAETANO POLIDORI.

1848.



the translations, which, though containing evidences of a strong feeling of the truth and simplicity of the originals, appeared to me harsh, and want correctness in the versification. I guess indeed that you are altogether not so musical as pictorial. But, when I came to the originals of your own, I recognized an unquestionable poet, thoughtful, imaginative, and with rare powers of expression. I hailed you as such at once, without any misgiving; and, besides your Dantesque heavens (without any hell to spoil them), admired the complete and genial round of your sympathies with humanity. I know not what sort of painter you are. If you paint as well as you write, you may be a rich man; or at all events, if you do not care to be rich, may get leisure enough to cultivate your writing. But I hardly need tell you that poetry, even the very best—nay, the best, in this respect, is apt to be the worst—is not a thing for a man to live upon while he is in the flesh, however immortal it may render him in spirit.—When I have succeeded in finding another house, I hope you will give me the pleasure of your acquaintance: and meantime I am, Dear Sir, with hearty zeal in the welfare of your genius,

“Your obliged and faithful Servant,

“LEIGH HUNT.

“P.S.—You will see some pencil-marks at the side of the passages I most admired.”

I possess a portrait done by my brother in pencil in June 1848, representing our grandfather, head and shoulders. It is excellently good; and so strongly and exactly realistic as to prove to demonstration that Rossetti, a short while before the Præraphaelite scheme began, required no further prompting from outside as to the artistic virtues inherent in a scrupulous fidelity to Nature. Mr. Brown had no doubt impressed this upon him, if he had not already found it out for himself. In one way or another he had laid the lesson thoroughly to heart, and was more than a mere apprentice to Truth. My reader can judge for himself of this portrait, as it is here reproduced.

Rossetti closed eagerly with Holman Hunt's suggestion as to beginning a picture, to combine practice in still-life and accessory with more palatable work; and he asked to be

allowed to become joint-tenant of a studio which Hunt was about to take. To this his new friend acceded; and nothing surely could have been more serviceable to my brother as a beginner in the painting-art. The studio selected was a back-room on the first floor at No. 7 (now 46) Cleveland Street, Fitzroy Square, close to Howland Street. Mr. Stephens has given an amusingly cheerless account of this establishment. I will borrow a few sentences from him; though my own reminiscences of the place, tinted as they are by the light-heartedness of youth, do not present quite so gloomy a picture.

"Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans!"

And indeed I was not fully nineteen when my brother entered upon his studio at No 7 Cleveland Street, his living and sleeping rooms being still at No 50 Charlotte Street.

"It was even then a dismal place, the one big window of which looked to the East, and through which, when neither smoke, fog, nor rain, obscured the unlovely view, you could see the damp orange-coloured piles of timber a neighbouring dealer in that material had, within a few yards of the room, piled in monstrous heaps upon his backyard. Nothing could be more depressing than the large gaunt chamber, . . . where the dingy walls, distempered of a dark maroon which dust and smoke stains had deepened, added a most undesirable gloom. The approach to it was by a half-lighted staircase up which the fuss and clatter of a boys'school kept by the landlord of the house . . . frequently arose."

And now we come to the third link in this chain of acquaintanceship--namely, to Rossetti's close fellowship with Millais. Brown had indirectly led on to Hunt, and Hunt led on directly to Millais. The latter, born in the summer of 1829, was Rossetti's junior by more than a year, but vastly in advance of him as an artist. I need not enter here upon the early career of this great painter; his quite singular promise in mere boyhood, his conspicuous successes in his first youth. Millais was the pattern--the unattainable pattern--for all

Academy-students, and was by this date an exhibiting painter of some performance and any amount of promise. My brother could not but know him by sight long before now, and must have exchanged speech with him more than once both at the Royal Academy and at the Cyclographic Society. With Millais however he was not as yet on a footing of friendship, which Hunt was. "The companionship of Rossetti and myself," says Mr. Hunt, "soon brought about a meeting with Millais, at whose house one night we found a book of engravings of the frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa." The house was that at which Millais lived with his parents, No. 83 (now 7) Gower street, having a long rather shed-like studio, built out on the ground-floor along the line of a narrow turning. The juncture was a momentous one for all the three young painters.

### XIII.

#### *THE PRÆRAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD.*

MR. HOLMAN HUNT considers, and I would be willing to confirm his view if it needed any confirmation, that it was the inspection of the Campo Santo engravings, "at this special time, which caused the establishment of the Præraphaelite Brotherhood." They are not engravings doing justice to the works represented—indeed, Ruskin has somewhere termed them "Lasinio's execrable engravings." But they give some idea of the motives, feeling, and treatment, of the paintings of Gozzoli, and of those ascribed to Orcagna and other mediæval masters. It seems that Rossetti was not quite prepared beforehand to believe in these very olden painters, and Brown specially cautioned him not to undervalue them. I well recollect the enthusiasm with which, subsequently to seeing the engravings, Dante spoke to me on the subject, and soon afterwards I was allowed an opportunity of examining the prints for myself. Most things, whether books or ideas, were in common, at this time and for years after-

wards, between my brother and myself, and whatever one of us lighted upon was rapidly imparted to the other. Mr. Hunt makes some valuable observations on the direction of mind which started the Præraphaelite idea, and on the respective contributions which the very diverse temperaments and gifts of its three initiators brought to the common stock. I will not take the liberty of borrowing his remarks *en bloc*; but, bearing them heedfully in mind, I will say what I can on the subject from my own standing-point.

The Lasinio incident may be proper to the month of August or of September 1848, when Hunt was twenty-one years of age, Rossetti twenty, and Millais nineteen. They had thus barely ceased to be big boys; but Hunt and Millais were already very capable and recognized painters, and all three were enthusiasts—enthusiasts with a difference. Millais perceived within himself powers which far exceeded those of most of the acknowledged heads of his profession, but which had been exercised as yet without any inbreathing of new and original life; Hunt was not only stubbornly persistent, but eagerly desirous of developing something at once solid and uncommon; Rossetti, a beginner in the art, was fired with inventive imaginings and a love of beauty, and was just as anxious as his colleagues to distinguish himself, though as yet not equally certain to do so. All three contemned the commonplace anecdotal subjects of most British painters of the day, and their flimsy pretences at cleverness of execution, unsupported either by clear intuition into the facts of Nature, or by lofty or masculine style, or by an effort at sturdy realization. There were of course exceptions, some distinguished and some noble exceptions; but the British School of Painting, as a school, was in 1848 wishy-washy to the last degree; nothing imagined finely, nor descried keenly, nor executed puissantly. The three young men hated all this. They hated the cant about Raphael and the Great Masters, for utter cant it was in the mouths of such underlings of the brush as they saw all around them; and they determined to make a new start on a firm basis. What

as the basis to be? It was to be serious and elevated invention of subject, along with earnest scrutiny of visible acts, and an earnest endeavour to present them veraciously and exactly.

This does not fully account for their calling themselves Præraphaelites. Mr. Hunt says—and he must be correct—that the word Præraphaelites “had first been used as a term of contempt by our enemies”; founded, it would seem, more upon the talk of the young men than upon anything (apart from such minor matters as the study of the Ghiberti Gates) which they had actually done. Hunt’s pictures as yet had no distinctively Præraphaelite quality, Millais’s were quite in the contrary line, and Rossetti was not known to have painted at all. But they saw, in the Italian painters from Giotto to Leonardo, and in certain early Flemish and German painters so far as they knew about them (which was little), a manifest emotional sincerity, expressed sometimes in a lofty and solemn way, and sometimes with a candid *naïveté*; they saw strong evidences of grace, decorative charm, observation and definition of certain appearances of Nature, and patient and loving but not mechanical labour. In the language of art there is, or ought to be, a certain distinction between the terms “conventionalism” and “conventionality.” Of conventionalism—an adherence to certain types, traditions, and preconceptions—there is assuredly a vast deal in these early masters; but of conventionality, as a lifeless application of school-precepts, accepted on authority, muddled in the very act of acceptance, and paraded with conceited or pedantic self-applause, there is, in the men who carried the art forward from point to point, no defined trace. Each of them did his best as he best could, and handed on the art to be bettered by his successor.

It was with this feeling, and obviously not with any idea of actually imitating any painters who had preceded Raphael, that the youths adopted as a designation, instead of repelling as an imputation, the word Præraphaelite. The word “Brotherhood” was, it seems, Rossetti’s term, put forward as

being preferable—which it most clearly was—to any such term as Clique or Association. And thus was the Præraphaelite Brotherhood constituted as the autumn of 1848 began.

Some writers have said that Rossetti was the originator of Præraphaelitism. This ignores the just claims of Hunt and Millais, which I regard as co-equal with his. Rossetti had an abundance of ideas, pictorial and also literary, and was fuller of "notions" than the other two, and had more turn for proselytizing and "pronunciamientos"; but he was not at all more resolute in wanting to do something good which should also be something new. He was perhaps the most defiant of the three; and undoubtedly a kind of adolescent defiance, along with art-sympathies highly developed in one direction, and unduly or even ignorantly restricted in others, played a part, and no small part, in Præraphaelitism. But Hunt, if less strictly defiant, was still more tough, and Millais was all eagerness for the fray—"longing to be at 'em," and to show his own mettle. The fact is that not one of the three could have done much as an innovator without the other two. A bond of mutual support was essential, and an isolated attempt might have fizzed off as a mere personal eccentricity. As it was, Præraphaelitism proved to be very up-hill work. It was more abused, as being the principle of a few men in unison, than it would have been if exemplified by one of them only; but the very abuse was the beginning of its triumph. Any one of them, if acting by himself, might have been recognized as a man of genius; he would hardly have become a power in art. If the invention of "the Præraphaelite Brotherhood" was a craze, it was a craze spiced with a deal of long-headedness. Some method in that sort of madness.

But, on these points as to his own relation to other Præraphaelite painters, Dante Rossetti has himself given a very distinct explanation. It appears in a letter which he addressed on 7 November 1868 to M. Ernest Chesneau, consequent on the publication of that able critic's book *Les Nations Rivaies dans l'Art*. The passage which I here quote

is printed in Professor Edouard Rod's volume, *Études sur le dix-neuvième Siècle*, 1888, and the Professor leaves unaltered Rossetti's "incorrections de langue":—

"En ce qui concerne la qualification de 'Chef de l'Ecole Préraphaélite' que vous m'attribuez d'après vos renseignements, je dois vous assurer le plus chaudement possible qu'elle ne m'est nullement due. Loin d'être 'Chef de l'Ecole' par priorité ou par mérite, je n'ai à peine me reconnaître comme y appartenant, si le style du peu que j'ai fait en peinture venait à être comparé avec les ouvrages des autres peintres nommés Préraphaélites. Ainsi, quand je trouve un peintre si absolument original que l'est Holman Hunt décrit comme étant mon 'disciple,' il m'est impossible de ne pas me sentir humilié en face de la vérité, et de ne pas vous assurer du contraire avec le plus grand empressement. Les qualités de réalisme, émotionnel mais extrêmement minutieux, qui donnent le cachet au style nommé Préraphaélite, se trouvent principalement dans tous les tableaux de Holman Hunt, dans la plupart de ceux de Madox Brown, dans quelques morceaux de Hughes, et dans l'œuvre admirable de la jeunesse de Millais. C'est la camaraderie, plutôt que la collaboration réelle du style, qui a uni mon nom aux leurs dans ces jours d'enthousiasme d'il y a vingt ans."

The charge that the Præraphaelite trio applied themselves exclusively to mere copyism, microscopic detail, and the like, has been so often alleged that it had better be dealt with here at once. Mr. Hunt puts the matter plainly, and is a real authority upon it. I will therefore extract a few of his words:—

"It may be seen that we were never, what often we have been called, 'Realists.' I think the art would have ceased to have the greatest interest for any one of the three painters concerned, had the object been only to make a representation, elaborate or unelaborate, of a fact in Nature. . . . In agreeing to use the utmost collaboration in painting our first pictures, we never meant more than that the practice was essential for training the eye and the hand of the young artist. We should never have admitted that the relinquishment of this habit of work by a matured painter would make him less of a Præraphaelite."

To add anything to Mr. Hunt's dictum on this matter is almost an impertinence. I will nevertheless confirm it, as being a point of which I also was cognizant—and indeed the like view was expressed in a kind of declaration of principles of the Brotherhood which I drew up at the beginning of 1851, but which seems to be lost this long while. I will however concede thus much to the antagonist—that, although it is certainly true that the Præraphaelites looked upon elaboration of detail as being rather a discipline for students than a necessary practice for proficients, they were not always sufficiently careful to affirm this, but, in the heat of controversy, would sometimes seem to imply that such elaboration was really requisite, as well as admissible and useful.

I will advert briefly to one other point. It has been said that Madox Brown declined to join the Præraphaelite Brotherhood (and that he did decline is true) on the ground partly that he had no faith in coteries, and partly that the Præraphaelites insisted upon copying from a model exactly as he or she stood, and without permitting any modification of visage, etc., to suit the picture. The objection to coteries was, I believe, made by Brown, and was far from unreasonable; but, as for the objection to not deviating from the model, I entertain considerable doubt. Some such rule as a theory may perhaps have been in some degree of favour with the Brotherhood at one time or other; but I am certain it was not acted upon even in their first fervid year. The head of Lorenzo, in Millais's picture of 1848-9, *Lorenzo and Isabella* from Keats's poem, was painted from me, but the hair was made golden, whereas mine was black. The head of the Virgin Mary, in Rossetti's picture of the same year, was painted from our sister Christina, and here again the hair was made golden instead of dark brown. From Hunt's picture I have no doubt that some similar detail might be cited. All this I say without implying that that notion of strictest adherence to the model has *no* value. I think it has some, as conducing to a general air of genuineness and *vraisemblance*, though it should not be pushed to a pragmatical extreme.



The three youths who founded the Præraphaelite Brotherhood did not aim at confining it to themselves, supposing that other eligible men could be discovered and enlisted. This was done with four young men—Thomas Woolner the sculptor, James Collinson a painter, Frederic George Stephens, an Academy-student of painting, and myself. I hardly know whether any of the three former had been sounded before the Lasinio evening, and the consequent formation of a Præraphaelite Brotherhood consisting of Millais, Hunt, and Rossetti. I presume not. Mr. Stephens was a particular ally of Mr. Hunt, who must, I apprehend, have been his introducer into the Brotherhood. Mr. Woolner was probably known to all three, and I could not affirm to which of them most—maybe Mr. Millais. Mr. Collinson, and of course myself, were nominated by my brother. I will say a little about three members of the Præraphaelite Brotherhood, or "P.R.B.," the "P.R.B.'s," as they called and for a while signed themselves. I omit Millais and Hunt, as being living men of renown with whom I need not meddle.

Thomas Woolner was a Suffolk man, born in December 1825, and was therefore about two years and a half older than Rossetti. He studied under the sculptor Behnes, and had already exhibited some few works before the P.R.B. was formed. Ultimately he became an R.A., and he died in October 1892. He produced some ideal works of superior quality, but became chiefly known as a portrait and bust sculptor. In this branch of the art, an energetic insight into character, and scrupulous skill in modelling and finish, were his leading merits. He was a genial manly personage, full of gusto for many things in life; a vigorous believer in himself and his performances, and (it may be allowed) rather disinclined to admit the deservings of any rivals in his art.

James Collinson, born in May 1825, was a small thick-necked man, chiefly a domestic painter, who began with careful and rather timid practice; in demeanour, modest and retiring. He had been a steady church-goer in the Anglican communion; but, about the date of the formation of the

Brotherhood, he became a Roman-catholic, and after a while saw fit, as a religionist, to resign his position as a P.R.B. He did not rise to distinction in the pictorial art, and died in the spring of 1881.

Frederic George Stephens, a little older than Hunt, exhibited a very few pictures in the early years of Præraphaelitism; but, while still young, he relinquished painting as a definite profession, and became an Art-critic, capable and influential. He had—or rather still has—an uncommonly well-moulded and picturesque face; painted by Millais as Ferdinand in the early picture *Ferdinand lured by Ariel*, and by Madox Brown soon afterwards as Jesus in the admirable work, now in the National Gallery, of *Jesus washing Peter's Feet*. It is a fact, and a melancholy one, that Dante Rossetti, as the years progressed, lost sight of all his "Præraphaelite Brothers" except only of Stephens at sparse intervals—"dear staunch Stephens, one of my oldest and best friends," as he wrote to Mr. Caine towards 1879.

Mr. Stephens had a great liking for the early schools of art, Italian and other. Possibly his knowledge of them exceeded that of any other P.R.B., and so far he might reasonably be called a "Præraphaelite." As to Woolner and Collinson, neither of them, from natural inclination or from course of study and practice, went at all in that direction; a fact which confirms the true view of the matter—that the Præraphaelites had no notion of recurring to or imitating old art, but simply aimed at pursuing the art in that spirit of personal earnestness and modesty, both as to the treatment of ideals and as to the contemplation of natural truths, which had animated the earlier Old Masters, and had faltered or failed in the later ones, and of which, in the current British School, the traces were few and far between. For myself, I obviously was, and I remained, an outsider, so far as the practice of fine art goes. I was made Secretary of the Brotherhood; and pretty soon I became an Art-critic—in *The Critic* (a weekly paper something like the *Athenæum*) from the summer of 1850, and in *The Spectator* from

November in the same year. I sometimes ponder with astonishment the fact that the first of these papers allowed me to instruct its public on matters of fine art before I was twenty-one years of age, and the second immediately afterwards. It is true that *The Germ* had appeared before I wrote in *The Critic*.

As soon as the Præraphaelite Brotherhood was formed it became a focus of boundless companionship, pleasant and touching to recall. We were really like brothers, continually together, and confiding to one another all experiences bearing upon questions of art and literature, and many affecting us as individuals. We dropped using the term 'Esquire' on letters, and substituted "P.R.B." I do not exaggerate in saying that every member of the fraternity was just as much intent upon furthering the advance and promoting the interests of his "Brothers" as his own. There were monthly meetings, at the houses or studios of the various members in succession; occasionally a moonlight walk or a night on the Thames. Beyond this, but very few days can have passed in a year when two or more P.R.B.'s did not foregather for one purpose or another. The only one of us who could be regarded as moderately well off, living *en famille* on a scale of average comfort, was Millais; others were struggling or really poor. All that was of no account. We had our thoughts, our unrestrained converse, our studies, aspirations, efforts, and actual doings; and for every P.R.B. to drink a cup or two of tea or coffee, or a glass or two of beer, in the company of other P.R.B.'s, with or without the accompaniment of tobacco (without it for Dante Rossetti, who never smoked at all), was a heart-relished luxury, the equal of which the flow of long years has not often presented, I take it, to any one of us. Those were the days of youth; and each man in the company, even if he did not project great things of his own, revelled in poetry or sunned himself in art. Hunt, too busy thinking, was the most sagacious talker; Woolner the most forceful and entertaining; Dante Rossetti the most intellectual. Such men could not be mere plodders in con-

versation : but all—to their credit be it spoken—were perfectly free-and-easy, and wholly alien from anything approaching to affectation, settled self-display, or stilted "tall talk." And this holds good of every member of the Brotherhood. Mr. Hunt has done *more* than ample justice to Rossetti's literary acquirements, saying of him, at the date when he entered upon the studio in Cleveland Street :—

"Rossetti had then perhaps a greater acquaintance with the poetical literature of Europe than any living man. His storehouse of treasures seemed inexhaustible. If he read twice or thrice a long poem, it was literally at his tongue's end ; and he had a voice rarely equalled for simple recitations. . . . *Sordello* and *Paracelsus* he would give by forty and fifty pages at a time. . . . Then would come the pathetic strains of W. B. Scott's *Rosabell*. . . . These, and there were countless other examples, all showed a wide field of interest as to poetic schools."

Had the Præraphælitic Brotherhood any ulterior aim beyond that of producing good works of art ? Yes, and No. Assuredly it had the aim of developing such *ideas* as are suited to the medium of fine art, and of bringing the arts of form into general unison with what is highest in other arts, especially poetry. Likewise the aim of showing by contrast how threadbare were the pretensions of most painters of the day, and how incapable they were of constituting or developing any sort of School of Art worthy of the name. In the person of two at least of its members, Hunt and Collinson, it had also a definite relation to a Christian, and not a pagan or latitudinarian, line of thought. On the other hand, the notion that the Brotherhood, as such, had anything whatever to do with particular movements in the religious world—whether Roman Catholicism, Anglican Tractarianism, or what not—is totally, and, to one who formed a link in its composition, even ludicrously, erroneous. To say that Præraphælitism was part of "the ever-rising protest and rebellion of our century against artificial authority," as in the cases of "the French Revolution" and Wordsworth and

Darwin, etc.,<sup>1</sup> is not indeed untrue, but is far too vague to account for anything. Again, the so-called German Præraphæelites—such as Schnorr, Overbeck, and Cornelius—were in no repute with the young British artists. They did, however, admire very much certain designs by Fulrich from the Legend of St. Genevieve. Neither was Ruskin their inciter, though it is true that Hunt had read and laid to heart in 1847 the first volume of *Modern Painters*, the only thing then current as Ruskin's work. I do not think any other P.R.B. (with the possible exception of Collinson) had, up to 1848 or later, read him at all. That the Præraphæelites valued moral and spiritual ideas as an important section of the ideas germane to fine art is most true, and not one of them was in the least inclined to do any work of a gross, lascivious, or sensual description; but neither did they limit the province of art to the spiritual or the moral. I will therefore take it upon me to say that the bond of union among the Members of the Brotherhood was really and simply this—1, To have genuine ideas to express; 2, to study Nature attentively, so as to know how to express them; 3, to sympathize with what is direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art, to the exclusion of what is conventional and self-parading and learned by rote; and 4, and most indispensable of all, to produce thoroughly good pictures and statues.

After the first fervour of youth was past, Rossetti was somewhat impatient of the terms Præraphæelitism and Præraphæelite. In 1880 he said to Mr. Caine something which that author records in the following words: "As for all the prattle about Præraphæelitism, I confess to you I am weary of it, and long have been. Why should we go on talking about the visionary vanities of half-a-dozen boys? What you call the movement was serious enough, but the banding together under that title was all a joke." And Mr. William Sharp says that, to a lady enquiring whether he was the Præraphæelite Rossetti (perhaps towards 1870), he replied,

<sup>1</sup> See Mrs. Wood's *Dante Rossetti and the Præraphæelite Movement*, p. 9.

"Madam, I am not an 'ite' of any kind; I am only a painter." These statements I accept; but it is not the less true that in 1848 and for some years afterwards he meant a good deal by calling himself Præraphaelite, and meant it very heartily.

I will complete here a few details about the Brotherhood, although these will lead me some way beyond the date which we have as yet reached, the autumn of 1848. In May 1849 it was settled that I, as Secretary to the Brotherhood, or its only non-professional member, should keep a Diary of the proceedings of the Society, and of the art-work of the several P.R.B.'s so far as that came within my cognizance. This I proceeded to do; and up to 8 April 1850 I kept the Diary without the omission of a day. Afterwards I was less regular; but still, allowing for several intervals, the Diary goes on to 29 January 1853. In my hands it continues; but I am sorry to say that at some date—possibly about 1855—Dante inspected the MS. when I was not by; and, finding some entries which, for one reason or another, he did not relish, he tore the pages up freely here and there—a summary proceeding quite in his style. I surmise that he saw some particulars about Miss Siddal (shortly to be mentioned); certainly nothing invidious about her, but he may have decreed in his own mind that her name should not appear in the record at all. Nevertheless a great deal still remains; and furnishes a very authentic, if also an unentertaining, account of what the seven Præraphælitcs were doing in those now remote years. There is a copy of Collinson's letter, May 1850, withdrawing from the Brotherhood—a step which he attributes to religious considerations as a Roman-catholic, though these are not defined with any extreme clearness. After this, in the autumn of the same year, is an entry purporting that Walter Howell Deverell "has worthily filled up the place left vacant by Collinson"—his nominator (I have no doubt, speaking from memory) being Dante Rossetti. But it appears that this election was considered not entirely valid by some other member or members, and, at a meeting of 9 February 1851, it was ruled that any such new member

must be subjected to annual re-election. At a previous meeting, 13 January, Millais expressed a doubt whether the name P.R.B. should be continued, as being liable to misconstruction; and a resolution was passed that each member should put down in writing what meaning he attached to the name, these declarations to be submitted to the next ensuing meeting. I feel considerable doubt whether any member, except myself, gave practical effect to the resolution. At any rate, the Diary shows nothing further about the matter. These were last dying efforts at a continuance of regular meetings, which, as recorded on 2 December 1850, had then already become "thoroughly obsolete." With virtuous intentions, new and stringent rules about meetings, etc., were adopted on 13 January 1851; but they were forthwith disobeyed, and the Præraphaelite Brotherhood, as a practical working organisation, and something more than a mere knot of friends, may be regarded as from that date sinking into desuetude. For this there was at the time no sort of real reason; only that the several members were developing each in his own proper direction, were hard at work and scattered in local position, and found that any inclination for assembling together was subject to too many interruptions and obstacles. I fancy that Mr. Stephens and myself were the two members who most sincerely regretted this disruption. And so, as a definite scheme in the art-world, ended the Præraphaelite Brotherhood. The members got to talk less and less of Præraphaelitism, the public more and more; and the name still persists in a very active condition—which is also a very lax and undefined one, and in many instances wholly misapplied.

In Rossetti's letter to his sister, dated 8 November 1853, a quotation may be observed, consequent upon the election of Millais as an Associate of the Royal Academy—

"So now the whole Round Table is dissolved."

and so it proved to be—if indeed the dissolution is not to be reckoned as dating earlier, which for most practical purposes it did. Christina hereupon, 10 November, wrote

a sonnet, neat though irregular, to which I will give a niche in my narrative:—

THE P.R.B.

"The P.R.B. is in its decadence:

For Woolner in Australia cooks his chops,  
And Hunt is yearning for the land of Cheops;  
D. G. Rossetti shuns the vulgar optic;  
While William M. Rossetti merely lops  
His B's in English disesteemed as Coptic;  
Calm Stephens in the twilight smokes his pipe,  
But long the dawning of his public day;  
And he at last the champion great Millais,  
Attaining Academic opulence,  
Winds up his signature with A.R.A.  
So rivers merge in the perpetual sea;  
So luscious fruit must fall when over-ripe;  
And so the consummated P.R.B."

This sonnet had wholly lapsed from my recollection until I happened to light upon it during the progress of the present Memoir. The only point in it which in our time seems rather obscure is the reference to myself—which must mean that I, in my press-criticisms, made light of my P.R.B. colleagues (which is joke, not fact), and that my utterances met with no public regard (which is partial but not entire fact; for these criticisms, appearing in a paper of such high repute as *The Spectator*, and being, in 1850 to 1852, nearly the only press-reviews which upheld the Præraphaelite cause, did excite some attention, and I suppose some anger. Mr. Stephens, who succeeded me on *The Critic*, must have co-operated). I will take this opportunity of saying that the statement, which has been constantly repeated in recent months, that Christina went among us by the name of "the Queen of the Præraphaelites," is, to the best of my knowledge and remembrance, a mere invention. It was first put forward, I apprehend, by Mrs. Tooley, in an article on Christina which she published, in the autumn of 1894, in a serial entitled *The Young Woman*. I knew nothing of such an appellative; Christina, to whom I mentioned it, knew nothing also; and



Mr. Stephens, who has a long memory on all such details, neither knows nor believes anything of it.

I am minded—and I hope not to the reader's serious disgust—to insert here those Rules of the Brotherhood which, as foresaid, were adopted on 13 January 1851, and were never carried into effect. They show or suggest not only what we then intended to do, but a great deal of what had been occupying our attention since the autumn of 1848. The day when we codified proved also to be the day when no code was really in requisition. The document, which is of course in my handwriting, runs as follows :—

“P.R.B.—Present, at Hunt's, himself, Millais, Stephens, and V. M. Rossetti, 13 January 1851.

“In consideration of the unsettled and unwritten state of the Rules guiding the P.R.B., it is deemed necessary to determine and adopt a recognized system.

“The P.R.B. originally consisted of seven members—Hunt, Millais, Dante and William Rossetti, Stephens, Woolner, and another ; and has been reduced to six by the withdrawal of the last. It was at first positively understood that the P.R.B. is to consist of these persons and no others—secession of any original member not being contemplated ; and the principle that neither this highly important rule nor any other affecting the P.R.B. can be repealed or modified, nor any finally adopted, unless on unanimous consent of the members, is hereby declared permanent and unalterable.

“Rule 1. That William Michael Rossetti, not being an artist, be Secretary of the P.R.B.

“2. Considering the unforeseen vacancy as above stated, Resolved that the question of the election of a successor be postponed until after the opening of the year's art-exhibitions. This Rule to be acted on as a precedent in case of any future similar contingency.

“3. That, in case a new election be voted, the person named as eligible be on probation for one year, enjoying meanwhile all the advantages of full membership, except as to voting.

“4. That, on the first Friday of every month, a P.R.B. meeting, such as has hitherto been customary, be held.

“5. That the present meeting be deemed the first in rotation under the preceding Rule ; and that the future meetings be held

at the abodes of the several members, in order as follows—Millais, Dante Rossetti, William Rossetti, Stephens, Woolner.

"6. That, in the event of the absence of the Member at whose house any meeting falls due, or other obstacle—to be allowed as valid by the others—the Secretary be made aware of the fact; and that the Member next in rotation act for the absent Member: the ensuing meetings to follow as before provided.

"7. That unjustified absence under such circumstances subject the defaulter to a fine of 5s.

"8. That a Probationary Member be not required to take his turn in this rotation.

"9. That at each such monthly meeting the Secretary introduce any business that may require consideration—to the exclusion of other topics until such business shall have been dispatched.

"10. That any Member unavoidably absent be entitled to send his written opinion on any subject fixed for consideration.

"11. That, failing full attendance at a meeting, or unanimously expressed opinion, the members present may adopt Resolutions,—to remain in force until a dissenting opinion shall be made known.

"12. That any member absent from a meeting without valid excuse—to be allowed by the others—shall forfeit 2s. 6d.; and that no engagement with any other person whatever be held to supersede the obligation of a P.R.B. meeting.

"13. That the January meeting of each year be deemed the Anniversary Meeting.

"14. That the application of fines accruing as before specified be determined, by majority of votes, at each such annual meeting.

"15. That at each annual meeting the conduct and position of each P.R.B. during the past year, in respect of his membership, be reviewed; it being understood that any member who shall not appear to have acted up to the best of his opportunities in furtherance of the objects of the Brotherhood is expected, by tacit consent, to exert himself more actively in future.

"16. That the Secretary be required, as one chief part of his duty, to keep a *Journal of the P.R.B.*

"17. That the Journal remain the property of the Brotherhood collectively, and not of the Secretary or any other individual member; that it be considered expedient in ordinary cases to read the Journal at each meeting at the Secretary's residence; and that

ny member have the power to require its production whenever he may think fit.<sup>1</sup>

"18. That any election which may be hereafter proposed be determined by ballot.

"19. That any such election be renewable annually by vote of the six original members.

"20. That any member considered unworthy to continue in the brotherhood cease to be a P.R.B. on the unanimous vote of his peers—*i.e.*, of those in the same class, as regards date of election, as himself.<sup>2</sup>

"21. That the fines be received by the Secretary.

"22. That the 23rd of April be kept sacred annually to Shakespeare, as an obligation equally binding as that of a P.R.B. meeting.

"23. That, in case any P.R.B. should feel disposed to adopt publicly any course of action affecting the Brotherhood, the subject be in the first instance brought before the other members."

Having now disposed of the Præraphaelite Brotherhood as an organization, I must revert to the doings of Dante Rossetti in the studio which from the latter end of August 848 he shared with Mr. Hunt. It seems that the idea at starting was that Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti, should each produce an etching from Keats's *Isabella*, and thus show forth to the public their close connexion in purpose and in work. This intention however did not take effect. Millais, in lieu of an etching, proceeded to paint his celebrated picture from *Isabella*; Hunt undertook *Rienzi swearing Revenge over his*

<sup>1</sup> Up to this point the Rules are written out by me in a clear deliberate script, being evidently a recast, done at leisure, from my first hasty jottings. The subsequent Rules are written hurriedly, and must have reached me in some different way: I forget the details. The restrictive clause, 17, as to the Journal, was proposed by myself. It was not a precautionary measure against me taken by some one else.

<sup>2</sup> No doubt this must be imperfectly expressed. The real intention must be that, whereas an original P.R.B. could only be discarded by the votes of the other original members, a subsequently elected P.R.B. could be discarded by the votes of *the original members, and also* of any members of his own standing in point of date.

*Brother's Corpse*; and Rossetti chose as his subject *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, painted on panel, 33 inches by 25. I have no clear recollection of any details leading up to this selection. He must have thought that the subject was one particularly worthy of a "Præraphælite" painter; and perhaps the consideration that he could treat it without any strained or difficult actions, and without any plethora of accessory, and with a certain reserve of style rather than energetic realism in this his first attempt, may have weighed with him. Of course however the plan was to paint all parts of the picture carefully from Nature, and this he did not fail to do. Hunt was of much use to him as an adviser, and Madox Brown frequently came in to inspect and control. Rossetti, according to Mr. Hunt, displayed "unchecked impatience at difficulties"; and I can remember something of this. A remonstrance from Hunt had a good effect, and the young painter managed to curb himself somewhat. "When he had once sat down," says Mr. Hunt, "and was immersed in the effort to express his purpose, and the difficulties had to be wrestled with, his tongue was hushed, he remained fixed, and inattentive to all that went on about him; he rocked himself to and fro, and at times he moaned lowly or hummed for a brief minute, as though telling off some idea." He found time also for sitting to Hunt for the head of Rienzi, and to Brown for that of the Fool of King Lear in the picture (previously mentioned) of *Cordelia watching the Bedside of Lear*. Both of these are good likenesses, and must remain of the highest interest to sympathizers with Rossetti as showing what he appeared in the birth-year of Præraphælitism. Moreover he painted in oils a head of Christina, which must thus be the very first finished painting he produced.

Perhaps Rossetti had never been forestalled in representing an ideal scene of the home-life of the Virgin Mary with her parents; certainly not in the particular invention which this picture embodies. The Virgin, aged about seventeen, is shown working at an embroidery under the eye of her mother

St. Anna. The embroidery represents a lily, the emblem of purity, which she copies from a plant watered by a child-angel. The father St. Joachim<sup>1</sup> is behind, trailing up a vine. The Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, is also present. The head of the Virgin was painted from Christina Rossetti, that of St. Anna from our mother: both very faithful likenesses. The vase containing the lily is mounted upon six large columns lettered with the names of virtues, Charity being the uppermost. There are numerous other details, each with symbolic or spiritual meaning; and I will venture to say that every one of the meanings is well conceived and rightly indicated. For the frame of the picture my brother had a slip of gilt paper printed (I still possess a copy of it) containing two sonnets of his composition—the first setting forth the general purport of the work, and the second its individual symbols. The sonnets have been reproduced elsewhere, and with some reluctance I omit them here; but may observe that the leading conception of the picture is expressed in the close of the second sonnet—

"She soon shall have achieved  
Her perfect purity; yea God the Lord  
Shall soon vouchsafe His son to be her son."

This picture is painted in rather bright but not crude colours—love for the primary hues, so much affected by painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, being a very marked trait in the practice of the Præraphaelite Brotherhood at its inception. The handling is delicate and finished, aiming at delicacy rather than strength, but it should hardly perhaps be called timid; the surface is rather thin. If I remember right, the only medium used was copal, for the P.R.B.'s had a horror of thick and cloggy vehicles. There is certainly not the least *bravura* in the work, neither did its painter wish that there should be any; but it is very far from being

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bell Scott says "St. Joseph," and laughs at his being occupied otherwise than as a carpenter; but, the personage being mis-stated, the laugh is misapplied.

incompetent, and, considered as the first painting of a youth of twenty, it may claim to be highly remarkable. There is (or was) some gilding in the hair of the Virgin and in the nimbus round the Dove. The forms are pure and simple, but not ascetic, and of course with no sort of copyism from archaic art. The point most approaching to rigidity is the straight contour-line formed by Mary's legs, running parallel to the embroidery-frame. This would have been improved by some modification.

There are three sonnets by Rossetti which belong to the early days of Præraphælitism, and which well deserve to be considered by persons who would like to understand that movement, and the temper in which Rossetti viewed it. They now form a portion of *The House of Life*, and are named collectively *Old and New Art*. The second and third—bearing the titles *Not as These*, and *The Husbandman*—were written in 1848; the first, *St. Luke the Painter*, in 1849; and this was intended to illustrate a picture (never painted) of Luke preaching, having beside him pictures, his own work, of Christ and the Virgin Mary. These three sonnets testify to a highly religious (not necessarily dogmatic) view of the function of the Art, to love of the old painters, and revolt against the more modern ones, and to a modest and yet resolute desire to aid in reinstating the Art in its legitimate place. The spirit which animates the sonnets is that of a man destined to dare and do, and to overcome.

Another painting—his second oil portrait—was produced by Dante Rossetti towards the close of 1848—the likeness of our father, half-length life-size, commissioned by Dante's godfather Mr. Lyell. Both as a likeness and as a picture this work is creditable and interesting, without being excellent.

#### XIV.

##### *FIRST EXHIBITED PICTURE—1849.*

As this is a Memoir of Rossetti, and not a Monograph on the Præraphælite Brotherhood, I shall not apply myself to

following out the course of the several members ; but will only say that the three chief painters, Millais, Hunt, and Rossetti, were ready with their pictures in time for the Exhibiting-season of 1849. Millais and Hunt sent to the Royal Academy, Rossetti to the so-called Free Exhibition near Hyde Park Corner. This was the second year of that Exhibition as a Picture Gallery. Its first year, 1848, had been distinguished by the display of Madox Brown's highly interesting and important painting, *Wiclif reading his Translation of the New Testament to John of Gaunt* ; a painting which, in its bright but rather pale colouring, lightness of surface, and general feeling of quietism,<sup>1</sup> had beyond a doubt served in some respects to mould the ideas and beacon the practice of the P.R.B.'s. The Free Exhibition was not really free. The exhibiting artists had to pay for their space, and a percentage upon sales, and the public had to pay for admission. I suppose that it professed to be free on the very ground that all artists were free to hang pictures there if only they would pay for the space ; and I further suppose that this was a principal incentive to my brother for betaking himself to that gallery rather than the Royal Academy. Mr. Brown's example (for he again exhibited here in 1849) must also have influenced him. My brother was proud, and in his way prudent as well ; and he must have contemplated with revulsion the mere possibility of being rejected at the Academy—an institution which (apart from any crudities or peculiarities in his first picture) might perhaps view him with some disfavour as having abandoned the Academy course of instruction, and learned from an outsider how to handle pigments and brushes. Next year, 1850, the Free Exhibition quitted Hyde Park Corner, and went to Regent Street near Langham Place, and was there entitled the National Institution, or Portland Gallery. It continued for some years, dying out towards 1855. *The Girlhood of*

<sup>1</sup> I have not seen this picture in late years ; have some idea that it was re-worked upon, and strengthened in tint and tone.

*Mary Virgin* was signed "Dante Gabriele Rossetti, P.R.B.,"<sup>1</sup> and the same initials appeared on the pictures of Millais and Hunt, and also of Collinson. This year the initials passed without exciting any definite notice.

It is a fact that the paintings of our three Præraphaelites were well received by press and public, and Millais and Hunt were more than tolerably well hung in the Academy. This becomes a remarkable fact when we consider the storm of disapprobation, rage, and contumely, which the pictures of the same men—certainly showing an advance in pictorial quality—encountered in the exhibitions of 1850. The reason for this differing treatment is obvious enough, and not less discreditable than obvious. In 1849 the pictures were judged on their merits, as three independent productions of young and promising men. In 1850 the initials P.R.B. were understood; the young men were discovered to be working on a common principle, in antagonism more or less decided to established rules and current reputations; and the floodgates of virulence were let loose, not because the pictures were bad—they are now well known to be good—but because their authors were regarded and detested as pestilent heretics. It is a humiliating retrospect, but not for the P.R.B.'s.

The Free Exhibition opened at the end of March 1849, the Academy of course at its usual date, the first Monday in May; and thus, of all the Præraphaelites, Rossetti happened to be the first to challenge a public verdict. As I have already intimated, it proved a favourable one. I cannot say how many papers criticized him. I have before me five extracts, and possibly these—along with *The Builder*, which was also laudatory—were all. They come from the *Art Journal*, *Literary Gazette*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Observer*, and *Athenæum*. In all of them there is high praise, intermixed with blame, more or less mild. Soon after that date I came to know something of Art-critics, their ways and means; and

<sup>1</sup> So Mr. Sharp says. This seems to be the earliest instance in which Rossetti used "Dante" as his *first* christian name. In the printed Catalogue the name stands "G. D. Rossetti."



I can safely say that in my youth—I will go no further than that—they knew, as a body of men, only a very moderate proportion of what they talked about. But clearly Dante Rossetti had no reason to complain at this period. The critics were more than courteous to a youth as yet totally unknown. I will give here the notice from the *Athenæum*, being the most elaborate of the five. In 1850 it was generally understood by the Præraphaelites—and I believe correctly so—that Mr. Frank Stone the painter was the Art-critic of the *Athenæum*. He was then highly abusive. Whether he was the same writer who had sounded a very different note in 1849 I do not profess to know.

“It is pleasant to turn from the mass of commonplace, the record of mere fact or the extravagant conceits exhibited in the illustrations of some of our most cherished writers, prose and poetic, to a manifestation of true mental power, in which Art is made the exponent of some high aim, and what is ‘of the earth, earthy,’ and of the Art, material, is lost sight of in a dignified and intellectual purpose. Such a work will be found here; not from a long-practised hand, but from one young in experience, new to fame, Mr. G. D. Rossetti. He has painted *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (368); a work which, for its invention and for many parts of its design, would be creditable to any exhibition. In idea it forms a fitting pendant to Mr. Herbert’s *Christ subject to his Parents at Nazareth*. A legend may possibly have suggested to Mr. Rossetti also the subject of his present work [I am sure this was not the fact]. The Virgin is, in this picture, represented as living amongst her family, and engaged in the task of embroidering drapery—to supply possibly some future sacred vestment [no such intention]. The picture, which is full of allegory, has much of that sacred mysticism inseparable from the works of the early masters, and much of the tone of the poets of the same time. While immature practice is visible in the executive department of the work, every allusion gives evidence of maturity of thought—every detail that might enrich or amplify the subject has found a place in it. The personification of the Virgin is an achievement worthy of an older hand. Its spiritualized attributes, and the great sensibility with which it is wrought, inspire the expectation that Mr. Rossetti will

continue to pursue the lofty career which he has here so successfully begun. The sincerity and earnestness of the picture remind us forcibly of the feeling with which the early Florentine monastic painters wrought; and the form and face of the Virgin recall the words employed by Savonarola in one of his powerful sermons: 'Or pensa quanta bellezza avea la Vergine, che avea tanta santità che risplendeva in quella faccia della quale dice San Tommaso che nessuno che la vedesse mai la guardò per concupiscenza, tanta era la santità che rilustrava in lei.' Mr. Rossetti has, perhaps unknowingly, entered into the feelings of the renowned Dominican, who in his day wrought as much reform in Art as in morals. The coincidence is of high value to the picture."

The whole transaction with *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, considered as a first picture, was a most encouraging success. Rossetti hung it at his own discretion; he was complimented by the press; his sonnets passed not unnoticed, Sir Theodore Martin in especial being singularly struck by them; and he sold the painting promptly for his own price of £80. The purchaser was the Marchioness Dowager of Bath, in whose family our aunt, Charlotte Polidori, was governess, and afterwards companion. The Marchioness after a while presented the picture to her daughter Lady Louisa Feilding. With this lady the work remained until a recent date. Who the present owner may be I know not. After getting it back from the exhibition Dante painted a fresh head to the girl-angel. By 25 August he despatched her purchase to Lady Bath. Perhaps the best success of all was that, in 1864, receiving the picture for re-framing, he found it to be "a long way better than he thought." "It quite surprised me (and shamed me a little) to see what I did fifteen years ago," is an expression in one of his letters.

It has appeared to me no other than requisite to dwell at some length on the early years of my brother—his family surroundings, his beginnings in drawing and writing, his sympathies for painters and authors, his studies, and the commencement of his professional practice. We have now reached the point where he is an exhibiting and well-accepted painter,

and a poet of considerable though as yet not public performance. Were I to pursue with equal minuteness his doings from year to year in art and in literature, I should exceed the bounds which I contemplate—should perhaps exceed any *reasonable* bounds. Many matters remain which will require copious and free treatment; but I do not propose to turn this Memoir into an accurate—still less an exhaustive—record of all the pictures and designs, and all the writings, which he continued to produce from year to year. Some things stand out as landmarks or milestones in his career, and these will receive due consideration; others will be passed over or summarized. Besides, I have already produced a book, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer*,<sup>1</sup> giving in chronological order a great number of details, major and minor, about his performances, their sales and purchasers, etc. etc.; and some readers of the present narrative, feeling any interest in those particulars, can supplement, by reference to that volume, anything which they may hold to be deficient in this. My present scope is wider and more personal. The things which Dante Rossetti produced will indeed be of primary importance to it; but rather as being a symptom and outcome of his personality—a portion of his life—than as forming my main subject-matter.

## XV.

## THE GERM.

If Dante Rossetti cannot rightly be credited (in derogation of Hunt and Millais) with inventing the Præraphaelite movement and Brotherhood, a very significant enterprise, he certainly *can* be credited with inventing *The Germ*. He was eager to distinguish himself in literature, no less than painting, and wanted to have some safe vehicle both for ushering his writings before the public, and for diffusing abroad the Præraphaelite principles in art. I feel pretty sure that at first every

<sup>1</sup> Published by Cassell & Co., 1889. It is now out of print.

one of his colleagues regarded the enterprize as rash, costly, foredoomed to failure, and an interruption to other more pressing and less precarious work. But Rossetti was not to be denied. The magazine was enacted in his mind; it was to be, and was to enlist the energies of all the P.R.B.'s, and of some other persons as well. With varying degrees of reluctance his friends yielded. As the project progressed, some of them seem even to have yielded with willing assent. Among these, Hunt, Woolner, and myself, may have stood foremost.

The "P.R.B. Diary" shall be my chief guide in relating the history of *The Germ*; several relevant details will be found also in the Family-letters. The first entry which I find bearing upon this subject is dated 13 July 1849, and runs as follows:—

"In the evening Gabriel and I went to Woolner's with the view of seeing North (whom however we did not find at home) about a project for a monthly sixpenny magazine, for which four or five of us would write, and one make an etching—each subscribing a guinea, and thus becoming a proprietor. [As to North—a very familiar figure in those days with Woolner, Dante, and myself, but scarcely so with the other P.R.B.'s—some particulars will be found in my note to Letter C 8.] The full discussion of the subject is fixed for to-morrow at Woolner's."

The title first thought of was *Monthly Thoughts in Literature, Poetry, and Art*; and it was immediately projected to increase the magazine to forty pages, two etchings, and a price of one shilling. On 23 September, being in the Isle of Wight, I received a letter informing me that I was appointed Editor, "as difficulties in keeping back the ardour of our new proprietors [not all of them P.R.B.'s] began to rise up"; and a prospectus had been sent off to the printer's, with the title altered to *Thoughts towards Nature*, which was Dante's idea. Messrs. Aylott & Jones, of Paternoster Row, were selected as publishers. Soon afterwards a different title was proposed, *The P.R.B. Journal*; but to this I objected, partly on the ground that some of the writers, and even of the proprietors,

would not belong to the Brotherhood. In November we resolved to do no advertizing, owing to the expense. This decision was almost, yet not absolutely, adhered to. There was some small amount of ordinary advertizing; and in May placards were posted and carried about in front of the Academy exhibition.

We now come to December, the month which was to be devoted to the printing of our opening number, so that it might appear at the close of that month, or the beginning of January. On 17 December Rossetti resumed writing his prose story *Hand and Soul*, for our No. 1; on the 21st he was at it all day and all night,<sup>1</sup> and finished the narrative—the epilogue remaining over till the following day. Meanwhile, on the 19th, there had been a meeting of no small moment to us at his studio—which was, since 10 October, No. 72 Newman Street, the rent £26 per annum. We had finally to decide upon the title of our magazine; and the company consisted not only of the seven members of the Brotherhood, but also of the painters Madox Brown, Cave Thomas, and Deverell, the sculptor Hancock, and two brothers Tupper. One of these, George, was a partner in the Firm which had undertaken to print the magazine. The other, John Lucas, who had been an Academy-student well known to Hunt, and aiming at sculpture rather than painting, was now Anatomical Designer at Guy's Hospital, and later on he became Drawing-master at Rugby School, where he died in 1879—a very capable conscientious man, quite as earnest after truth in form and presentment as any P.R.B., learned in his department of art, and with a real gift for poetry, which received partial expression, and as yet, it may be feared, next to no recognition.<sup>2</sup> The title *Thoughts towards*

<sup>1</sup> So stated in the P.R.B. Diary; Dante Rossetti, in my Section 43, gives a slightly different account.

<sup>2</sup> I believe he has left a large quantity of unprinted verse and prose. Some of it ought to be published. He issued anonymously a noticeable book, 1869, entitled *Hiatus, the Void in Modern Education, by Outis*. There was a little lyric of Tupper's on the Garden of Eden in ruinous

*Nature* was not viewed with much predilection. Mr. Cave Thomas had some while before proposed *The Seed*; and he now offered (with others) two new names, *The Scroll*, and *The Germ*. The last was ultimately approved by a vote of six to four.

*The Germ* No. 1 appeared on or about 1 January 1850. I do not propose to go minutely into the contents of the magazine—still less into its merits and demerits; but, as regards No. 1, I may perhaps as well recite the full contents. No authors' names were here given (a point contrary to my liking); but in subsequent numbers some names, and also some pseudonyms, were supplied on the wrappers. No. 1 opens with Woolner's poem *My Beautiful Lady*, and *Of my Lady in Death*, accompanied by an etching by Hunt, consisting of two separate compositions. Then come—*The Love of Beauty*, sonnet, by Madox Brown; *The Subject in Art*, No. 1, by J. L. Tupper; *The Seasons*, by Coventry Patmore (known first to Woolner, and by this time to most of us); *Dreamland*, by Christina Rossetti; *My Sister's Sleep* (being No. 1 of *Songs of one Household*), by Dante Rossetti; *Hand and Soul*, by the same; a Review, by myself, of Clough's poem, *The Bothie of Toper na Fuosich* (*Toper-na-Vuolich* in later issues); *Her First Season*, sonnet, also by myself; *A Sketch from Nature*, by J. L. Tupper; and *An End*, by Christina Rossetti. On the first page of the wrapper was a sonnet, my performance, intended to indicate the point of view from which the Præraphaelites contemplated the expression of ideas, and the record of appearances, whether in literature or in art. The last page contained a slight programme of what the nature of the contents of the magazine generally would be. I cannot say that it is effectively done, nor do I now remember who did it. I incline to think that Dante Rossetti made the first draft, which, being freely over-

decay, of which Dante Rossetti thought very highly. He compared it to Ebenezer Jones's lyric, "When the world is burning"; and said that, had it been the writing of Edgar Poe, it would have enjoyed world-wide celebrity.

hauled by others, got muddled more or less. It contains the following deliverance regarding Fine Art—a deliverance which shows to a certain extent the principle of the P.R.B., but in a very meagre and stunted condition :—

“The endeavour held in view throughout the writings on Art will be to encourage and enforce an entire adherence to the simplicity of Nature ; and also to direct attention, as an auxiliary medium, to the comparatively few works which Art has yet produced in this spirit.”

A different programme—which was not however much more than a topsy-turvy of the original one—appeared on the wrappers of Nos. 3 and 4, which were less directly under the control of myself as editor, or of the other members of the Brotherhood.

The issue of No. 1 of *The Germ* was 700 copies, for No. 2 only 500. About 100 of No. 1 were sold by the publishers, besides nearly or quite as many through our own exertions among friends and sympathizers ; No. 2 went off even less well than this. There was a fancy in our circle for speaking of the magazine as “The Gurm.” I am not quite sure how this originated, but believe that some outsider, seeing the magazine in a shop, and not realizing to himself what the title meant, asked for it in that form of pronunciation. For Nos. 3 and 4, which were brought out at the risk of our friendly printing-firm, a new title, *Art and Poetry*, was invented by a member of the firm, Mr. Alexander Tupper. I hardly know how these numbers sold, but am sure it was very little. With No. 4, issued towards the close of April 1850, the magazine came to an end. If not before, it was behind, its time. There were some laudatory notices of the various parts—in *The Dispatch*, *John Bull*, *The Guardian*, *The Critic*, Howitt's *Standard of Freedom* ; a faintly patronizing one in the *Art Journal*, which disappointed us, as the editor, Mr. S. Carter Hall (whom Madox Brown was wont to call “Shirt-Collar Hall,” as designating the high respectability of his exterior) had previously written to one of us speaking of our

band as "the future great artists of the age and country"; others in *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Spectator*, and elsewhere. After balancing receipts and expenditure, we had to meet a printer's bill of £33 odd. This seems now a very moderate burden; but it was none the less a troublesome one to all or most of us at that period. In course of time it was cleared off, with the result—perhaps a salutary one—that none of us ever again made any proposal for publishing a magazine. For many years past *The Germ* has been a literary curiosity, fetching high fancy-prices; and more publishers than one have made proposals for re-printing it, but, owing to the dissent of one or other contributor, these proposals have had to be set aside. Even a single contribution to *The Germ*—the *Hand and Soul* of Dante Rossetti, as privately re-printed towards 1869—has been priced at no less than six guineas.

I will add here a couple of anecdotes about *Hand and Soul*, which is, from all points of view, a very interesting specimen of my brother's early work. The motto on my title-page is taken from it, and seems to me very appropriate, both to my brother's intrinsic quality as painter and poet, and to the material of these volumes. Readers of this tale may remember that it relates to a supposed Italian painter of the thirteenth century, Chiaro dell' Erma, who in 1239 saw his own soul in a visible female form, and painted her; a matter, by the way, which shows that Rossetti's knowledge of art-history was at this period extremely slight (unless indeed he voluntarily *chose* to go wrong, in the interest of his idea for the story), as it is totally impossible that, at so remote a date as 1239, any painter whatever should have produced a work at all corresponding with the details given concerning this picture. The *Épilogue* to the tale is written in a highly realistic tone, and contains many particulars about the picture, purporting for instance that it is to be found in the Pitti Gallery of Florence (had Rossetti known more about the likelihoods of such a case, he would have substituted the Accademia). There was a young lady of some fortune in



Worcestershire—Kidderminster, I think—who became the first wife of the landscape-painter Mr. Andrew McCallum; one of the prettiest and pleasantest little women I ever saw, with a most beaming splendid pair of eyes. She read *Hand and Soul* in *The Germ*, admired it, and believed it to be substantially true. Either before or after her marriage she was in Florence, and enquired at the Pitti for this picture, and was grievously disconcerted to find that nobody knew anything about it. In Mr. Sharp's book there is a story of some other lady who, at a much later date, professed to Rossetti that she had actually seen the picture at the Pitti, adding other relevant but not rigidly veracious details. This story also may be true; but I know (or at any rate remember) nothing about it, whereas I do know the story about Mrs. McCallum to be correct. My second anecdote relates to an etching which my brother undertook to do for *The Germ*. It has been more than once stated in print that this etching was to illustrate a different tale which he began writing, called *An Autopsychology*, suggested to him by an image of his own introduced into his poem *The Bride's Prelude*. The tale was not finished, but its beginning appears in his *Collected Works*, under the title *St. Agnes of Intercession*. The fact is that Millais offered to do for *The Germ* an etching for *The Autopsychology*; and he did it, and prints from the etching are still in existence. But the etching which Dante contemplated was for *Hand and Soul*, to be published in a number of *The Germ* later than that in which the tale itself had appeared. This etching—representing Chiaro in the act of painting his Soul—he drew in March 1850, and he got it bitten-in by Mr. Shenton the engraver; but, upon seeing a print of it on 28 March, he was so displeased with the result that, in his vehement mood, he tore up the impression, and scratched the plate over. I hardly think that I ever saw the design; would gladly do so now, were that but possible.

Though I do not want to dwell at any further length upon *The Germ*, I will specify the contributions of Dante Rossetti to Nos. 2, 3, and 4. They are—*The Blessed Damsel*, *The*

*Carillon, From the Cliffs—Noon, Pax Vobis*, and six *Sonnets for Pictures* (Meinling, Mantegna, Giorgione, and Ingres).<sup>1</sup> *The Blessed Damsel*, as I have said, had been written in his nineteenth year. Of that first form of the poem no copy appears to be now extant. Before printing it in *The Germ* he added four stanzas. I might make some guess as to which they are; but it would only be a guess, and it shall not here trouble my readers.

Perhaps some of them might be amused to hear the dirge of *The Germ*, as it was chanted at the time by Mr. John Tupper.

"Dedicated to the P.R.B. on the Death of 'The Germ,' otherwise known as 'Art and Poetry.'"

"Bring leaves of yew to intertwine  
With 'leaves' that evermore are dead,  
Those leaves as pallid-hued as you  
Who wrote them never to be read:  
And let them hang across a thread  
Of funeral-hemp, that, hanging so,  
Made vocal if a wind should blow,  
Their requiem shall be anthem'd.

"Ah rest, dead leaves!—Ye *cannot* rest  
Now ye are in your second state;  
Your first was rest so perfect, fate  
Denies you what ye then possessed.  
For you, was not a world of strife,  
And seldom were ye seen of men:  
If death be the reverse of life,  
You never will have peace again.

"Come, Early Christians, bring a knife,  
And cut these woful pages down:  
Ye would not have them haunt the town  
Where butter or where cheese is rife!  
No, make them in a foolscap-crown  
For all whose inexperience utter  
Believes High Art can once go down  
Without considerable butter.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W. M. Hardinge published, in *Temple Bar*, a very suggestive article on these sonnets.

"Or cut them into little squares  
 To curl the long locks of those Brothers  
 Præraphaelite who have long hairs—  
 Tremendous long, compared with others.<sup>1</sup>  
 As dust should still return to dust,  
 The P.R.B. shall say its prayers  
 That come it will or come it must—<sup>2</sup>

"A time *Sordello* shall be read,  
 And arguments be clean abolished,  
 And sculpture punched upon the head,  
 And mathematics quite demolished;  
 And *Art and Poetry* instead  
 Come out without a word of prose in,  
 And all who paint as Sloshua did  
 Have all their sloshy fingers frozen."<sup>3</sup>

## XVI.

## PAINTINGS AND WRITINGS, 1849—53.

FROM the early autumn of 1849 to the late spring of 1850 was a busy time with Dante Rossetti. Besides all the eagerness of planning and the flurry of working for *The Germ*, there was his small continental trip with Holman Hunt in the autumn, along with the production of a new picture for exhibition. Of the continental trip his Family-letters bear ample record in prose and verse. It was a

<sup>1</sup> This, I suppose, is a hit at my brother and Stephens, rather than other members of the P.R.B. The after reference to abolishing arguments and mathematics, and disliking sculpture, would also relate principally to my brother. He did not really dislike sculpture, but he much preferred painting.

<sup>2</sup> A line seems to be wanting in this stanza. I am copying from a transcript made at the time by myself, but I don't think the oversight can be mine.

<sup>3</sup> I have noted elsewhere that "slosh" was a term much in vogue with the Præraphæelites in their early days, to indicate a hasty, washy, indeterminate manner in painting, neglectful of severe form and accurate detail, and lavish of unctuous vehicle. "Sloshua" was Sir Joshua Reynolds (!)

valuable experience to him, but not one which he unreservedly enjoyed. He liked England and the English better than any other country and nation ; and he never crossed the sea without severe discomfort, or contemplated the crossing of it without repulsion. The few acquaintances that he made abroad played no part in his after-life. Strange to say, this small trip to Paris and Belgium was the longest, in point of duration and space combined, that he ever undertook.

I shall give here a brief account of the painting and designing work of Rossetti between the date in 1849 when he exhibited his first picture, and the date in 1854, 13 April, when Mr. Ruskin became personally known to him ; followed by a similar summary of his writing-work between the same dates. I name both in order of time as nearly as I can.

There was the beginning of a large oil-picture, with numerous figures, from a song in Browning's dramatic poem *Pippa Passes*, entitled *Hist, said Kate the Queen*. It was not finished, but a water-colour of the full composition exists. A pen-and-ink drawing, 1849, given to Millais, of *Dante drawing an Angel in Memory of Beatrice*—quite a different design from the subsequent water-colour, 1853, of the same subject. This pen-and-ink drawing is perhaps more decidedly marked by the "Præraphaelite" peculiarities of that date than anything else which Rossetti produced ; it is likewise his earliest subject taken from the *Vita Nuova*, to which he so frequently recurred afterwards. *The Laboratory* (from Browning's poem), which may be called his first water-colour. The pen-and-ink design *Hesperia Rosa*, with a motto from a song in Henry Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde*. The oil-picture, his second exhibited work, *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (or *The Annunciation*), now in the National Gallery. The landscape of trees etc. which he painted at Sevenoaks, while Mr. Hunt was in the same neighbourhood, in the very rainy autumn of 1850. I cannot recollect what was to have been the subject of this oil-picture. Long afterwards, 1872, he completed it under the title of *The Bower-meadow*. A water-colour, *Beatrice at a Marriage-feast denies Dante her Salutation*,

exhibited. The pen-and-ink design, *How they met Themselves*—a lover and his lady encountering their own wraiths in a forest, an incident ominous of approaching death. A crayon portrait of William Bell Scott. An exhibited water-colour, *Giotto painting the Portrait of Dante*. The scene, water-colour, from Dante's *Purgatorio*, where Beatrice says, "Guardami ben, ben son ben son Beatrice" He repeated this subject more than once, but always, I think, in varying compositions. A very interesting attempt at the beginning of 1853, not long persisted in, being an oil-picture in two compartments, life-sized half-figures, representing Dante's resolve to write the *Comedia* in memory of Beatrice. A pencil-head of Holman Hunt. The elaborate pen-and-ink design (begun in 1853, but not finished till 1858) of *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee*. The beginning of the oil-picture named *Found*.

These are the chief, but by no means the only, products of the years of which we are speaking. They show a considerable range in choice of subject and mode of treatment. Regarding execution, it may be said in general terms that Rossetti continued to progress, both in force and in facility, but did not evince any great disposition for attaining strenuous mastery in draughtsmanship, or resource in the management of perspective, or of architectural or landscape accessory. As to draughtsmanship of human and animal form, he of course always recognized the high importance of this, whether he fully achieved it or not. But for the other matters he retained till the last a large measure of personal indifference, though necessarily conscious—none more so—that these also are required in order to make a picture conformable to the modern standard. The fact is that he *preferred* the tone of mind which governed the treatment of such elements of the subject in olden art. That they should convey their message in a suggestive way he thought fully requisite; that they should be rigorously realized by scientific rule or naturalistic presentment he did not care; and, if under a system of that sort they usurped the place of the main idea or of human

emotion and expressional force, he wished them well away. I do not aver that he was right in this view—the reader may judge for himself—but only that his view it assuredly was.

As to five of these works I may add a few details.

For *Ecce Ancilla Domini* Rossetti began a sketch on 25 October 1849. To supplement this picture of the Annunciation he intended to execute a companion-subject, the *Death of the Virgin*. The latter he never even began, having come to the conclusion that such themes were "not for the market." Both pictures were to be chiefly white in hue. For the Annunciation—"The Virgin," so he told me, "is to be in bed, but without any bedclothes on, an arrangement which may be justified in consideration of the hot climate; and the Angel Gabriel is to be presenting a lily to her." This last point connects the picture with *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*; and the remark as to bedclothes testifies that, even in so ideal a subject as this, Rossetti was not unheededful of the Præraphælite doctrine that the treatment should be consistent with probable facts. More persons than one sat for the head of the Angel—two models named Maitland and Lambert, and myself, at any rate; for the Virgin's head, Christina, and also a Miss Love, who was I suppose a model. The head resembles Christina sufficiently to be accounted a likeness, but it is less like her than the head in *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*. Rossetti had all along purposed sending this picture to the Royal Academy; but at the last moment he altered his mind, and recurred to the National Institution (Free Exhibition). Its price was £50, but it remained unsold until the opening of 1853; when Mr. Francis McCracken, a ship-owner or packing-agent of Belfast, prompted by a friendly suggestion from Holman Hunt (from whom and from Madox Brown he had already bought some works), became the purchaser. At the end of 1850, on receiving the picture back from the National Institution, my brother again worked upon it, improving it materially by showing the Angel's left hand—for at first the Angel, like the Virgin herself, had only one

hand visible. He did some further work when Mr. McCracken settled to buy the picture; and to him he despatched it on 29 January 1853, altering the Latin title into *The Annunciation*, as a precaution against any charges (then equally rife and gratuitous) of "popery." "The blessed white eyesore" and "the blessed white daub" had come to be his terms for this now national possession, so long left on his hands. But his real sentiment on a question of art-work may have received truer expression in one of his Family-letters (September 1853) — "I shall never, I suppose, get over the weakness of making a thing as good as I can manage." Even as late as 1874 something was again done to the "white daub," but I think very little. He wrote: "It is best left alone, except just for a touch or two. Indeed, my impression on seeing it was that I couldn't do quite so well now!"

I have already referred to the very different reception which the Præraphaeelite pictures of 1850 encountered from artists, press, and public, from that which had been accorded to the works of 1849. The pictures were still signed "P.R.B."; and my brother had explained to his friend the sculptor Alexander Munro the meaning of those mysterious initials, which were not intended to be unduly pressed upon the attention of Academicians. Munro, a man of easy access to all sorts of people, divulged the matter to a brother-Scotchman, Angus Reach,<sup>1</sup> who was a light writer of those days; and the latter published it in the *Illustrated London News*. Hence much of the fluster, and much of the virulence. When *Ecce Ancilla Domini* appeared in the National Institution, prior to the opening of the Royal Academy, the *Athenæum* came down upon it on 20 April, in the following terms—and even these

<sup>1</sup> I need scarcely say that I bear no sort of grudge against Mr. Reach, who died a great number of years ago; but, to give my reader a moment's amusement, I will here retail a joke of Douglas Jerrold's which had, so far as I know, not yet got into print. Reach is a Gaelic name, properly pronounced as a dissyllable, Ree-ach; but naturally Londoners were wont to read it as a monosyllable, Reeck. Jerrold, being admonished to pronounce the name accurately, rejoined—"He is Ree-ach if you hear him, but Reeck [retch, spue] if you read him."

were mild in comparison with what befell the *Christian Missionary persecuted by the Druids* of Holman Hunt, and the so-called *Carpenter's Shop* of Millais:—

“But what shall we say of a work hanging by the side of Mr. Newenham's historical picture—which we notice less for its merits than as an example of the perversion of talent which has recently been making so much way in our school of art, and wasting the energies of some of our most promising aspirants? We allude to the *Ecce Ancilla Domini* of Mr. D. G. Rossetti (225). Here a certain amount of talent is distorted from its legitimate course by a prominent crotchet. Ignoring all that has made the art great in the works of the greatest masters, the school to which Mr. Rossetti belongs would begin the work anew, and accompany the faltering steps of its earliest explorers. This is *archæology* turned from its legitimate uses, and made into a mere pedant. Setting at nought all the advanced principles of light and shade, colour, and composition, these men, professing to look only to Nature in its truth and simplicity, are the slavish imitators of artistic inefficiency. Granted that in these early masters there is occasionally to be seen all that is claimed for them of divine expression and sentiment, accompanied by an earnestness and devotion of purpose which preserved their productions from oblivion—are such qualities inconsistent with all subsequent progress in historical excellence, or do these crotchet-mongers propose that the art should begin and end there? The world will not be led to that deduction by such puerilities as the one before us; which, with the affectation of having done a great thing, is weakness itself. An unintelligent imitation of the mere technicalities of old art—golden glories, fanciful scribblings on the frames, and other infantine absurdities—constitutes all its claim. A certain expression in the eyes of the ill-drawn face of the Virgin affords a gleam of something high in intention, but it is still not the true inspiration. The face of the Angel is insipidity itself. One arm of the Virgin is well drawn, and there is careful though timid workmanship in the inferior and accessorial part of the work, but this is, in many places, where it would have been better left out. Yet with this we have exhausted all the praise due, in our opinion, to a work evidently thrust by the artist into the eye of the spectator more with the presumption of a teacher than in the modesty of a hopeful and true aspiration after excellence.”



It is a pity that the authorities of the National Gallery have not yet seen their way to purchasing "Mr. Newenham's historical picture" (which represented *The Prince in the Tower*); the British public would then have the opportunity of realizing to themselves its marked superiority over *Ecce Ancilla Domini*.—The *Times* wrote in a tone partially resembling that of the *Athenæum*, but on the whole agreeable, recognizing the picture as "the work of a poet."

There is a little anecdote of this year which has never, I believe, been recorded, but which I understand to be indisputably true. About the time of the opening of the Academy-exhibition the Duke of Connaught had been born, and Queen Victoria could not visit the gallery; but, noticing all the hullabaloo in the newspapers about Millais's *Carpenter's Shop*, she required to have the picture sent to the Palace for her inspection. Whether Her Majesty liked it or not I have no idea.

As for the other four works which I have specified, the water-colour of *Giotto painting the Portrait of Dante* is in itself a noticeably complete invention, illustrating Dante's relation to painting and to poetry, present and future, and his love for Beatrice. But it was intended to be only the centre in a triptych, one wing representing Dante, as Priore in Florence, banishing the chiefs of both contending factions, and the other wing the exiled Dante and the Jester at the Court of Can Grande della Scala (the incident introduced into Rossetti's poem *Dante in Verona*). Rightly executed, this picture would have been his greatest work. The pencil head of Holman Hunt was done on 12 April 1853, when the Præraphæelites met together at Millais's house to produce portraits of one another, to be presented to their absent brother Woolner, who in July 1852 had gone to Australia; Millais doing Stephens and myself, and Hunt doing Millais and Dante Rossetti (I now possess the last). The design of *Mary Magdalene* was begun as a large picture towards 1860. This proceeded not very far, and was ultimately laid aside for good, nor do I know what became of the painted com-

mencement. A moderate-sized oil-sketch was completed about a year later. The oil-picture *Found* was a source of lifelong vexation to my brother, and to the gentlemen—some three or four in succession—who commissioned him to finish it. This work was nearly completed, but not quite, towards the close of Rossetti's life. An oil-monochrome, produced in May 1879, and showing the full composition, is extant. So far as the painting is concerned I will not here enter into further detail, but may spare a few words to a question often mooted—whether Rossetti did or did not take the subject of the picture from Mr. Bell Scott's poem of *Rosabell*. The facts are these.

Scott's poem relates to a country-girl, Rosabell (afterwards named Mary Anne), who, having gone to town as a milliner's assistant, becomes the mistress of a gentleman, Archer, and afterwards of another gentleman, Thorn, who supplies her with every luxury. Eventually he leaves her, and she goes from bad to worse, and dies a human wreck in a hospital. Before Thorn had left her, and therefore while she was still in high prosperity, her old rustic lover saw her. This scene is not introduced into the poem at all, but it is hinted at in an interview which the lover has with Rosabell's parents. One may surmise that the young man saw her flaunting in the Park or some such place, and did not so much as speak to or accost her. Now what does Rossetti's picture represent? It represents a rustic lover, a drover, who finds his old sweetheart at a low depth of degradation, both from vice and from penury, in the streets of London. He endeavours to lift her as she crouches on the pavement. This is an incident wholly diverse from Scott's incident. It may be said—If Rossetti had never read Scott's poem, he would not have thought of any such subject for his own picture. This may or may not be correct—I see no reason for thinking it correct; but at all events he has not taken his subject out of *Rosabell*. Mr. Scott's account of this matter, in his *Autobiographical Notes*, is highly inaccurate. He thinks that Rossetti trifled with him in June 1853 (the date of my brother's first visit to

Mr. Scott in Newcastle) by professing an intention of thereafter painting this subject as coming from *Rosabell* (which it does not); whereas (says Scott) he had already begun the picture, and had already painted the drover's cart and calf. The truth is that he had *not* then begun the picture, and did not paint the cart and calf until the end of 1854; but he had, I fancy, *designed* the subject towards 1852, if not earlier. To sum up—Rossetti did not borrow his subject from Scott, and did not mislead Scott as to any details pertaining to the subject or the picture.

I was referring just now to the departure of Mr. Woolner to Australia in July 1852, and to the meeting of his Præraphæclite Brothers, in April 1853, to draw portraits of one another as a gift to him. Intermediate between these dates was a sonnet addressed by Dante Rossetti to Woolner. It has never yet been published, but deserves to find a place among his poems, and I give it here.

#### TO THOMAS WOOLNER.

*First Snow, 9 February 1853.*

Woolner, to-night it snows for the first time.

Our feet know well the path where in this snow

Mine leave one track: how all the ways we know

Are hoary in the long-unwonted rime!

Grey as their ghosts which now in your new clime

Must haunt you while those singing spirits reap

All night the fields of hospitable sleep--

Whose song, past the whole sea, finds counter-chime.

Can the year change, and I not think of thee,

With whom so many changes of the year

So many years were watched—our love's degree

Alone the same? Ah still for thee and me,

Winter or summer, Woolner, here or there,

One grief, one joy, one loss, one victory.

I find in Mrs. Wood's book a statement on another point, not better founded (so far as I am aware) than Mr. Scott's allegation. She says that Rossetti seceded from "sacred art" because he was repelled by the morbid character of a picture

of religious bearing by James Collinson, *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*. I do not know from whom Mrs. Wood derived this information, nor have I the least recollection of any such fact. My impression is that the prolonged lack of any purchaser for the *Annunciation* picture had much more to do with his resolve.

A letter from Rossetti, dated 24 February 1854, and printed by Mr. Scott, is of some interest as showing a certain cohesion between the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers at that comparatively late time. Millais is here mentioned as the prime mover in a plan—which never came to anything—to get up a sketching-club on much the same system as that of the long-defunct Cyclographic Society. There were to be four Pre-Raphaelite members—Millais himself, Hunt, Stephens, and Rossetti; also their close allies—Madox Brown, Charles Collins, Scott, Arthur Hughes, and Munro. In addition to these came the landscape-painters, Mark Anthony (a fine genius, not adequately valued now), Inchbold, and Carrick; the renowned designers Leech and Richard Doyle; the excellent animal-painter Wolf; the painter-amateur Michael Halliday; and two ladies, the Marchioness of Waterford and the Honourable Mrs. Boyle (known as E.V.B.). I was to be secretary. "The two ladies"—said Rossetti, and with good reason—"are both great in design."

The writings of most importance belonging to this period are—*The Bride's Prelude*, *Dante at Verona*, *A Last Confession*, *Jenny*, *Dennis Shand* (a ballad of a rather light kind, not published), *The Burden of Nineveh*, *Stratton Water*, *Wellington's Funeral*, *The Staff and Scrip*, *Sister Helen*. Some of these however were not finished so early as the beginning of 1854. For instance, *Jenny* appears to have reached substantial completion about 1858, and something further was done to the poem in 1869, soon before its publication. *Sister Helen*, which may have been written in 1851 or early in 1852, was first printed in a Magazine—German, with an English issue supervised by Mrs. Mary Howitt, whom Rossetti now knew well—named *The Dussel-*

*dorf Artists' Annual*—I believe, the Part for 1854. It appeared with the initials H.H.H. (the letters stamped upon lead pencils of exceptional hardness), because, as once jotted down by Rossetti, "people used to say that my style was hard"—surely a stricture which does not come very near the mark, and has not been confirmed by a later generation of readers. Dr. Gordon Hake the poet has termed *Sister Helen* "the strongest emotional poem as yet in the language." The sonnet *Known in Vain*

("As two whose love, first foolish, widening scope")

was written in January 1853, and presents the conception (to repeat my own words used elsewhere) "of a man who in youth has been feeble in will, indolent and scattered, but who, when too late, wakes up to the duty and the privileges of work." This must be more or less autobiographical. It may be as well to say here that my brother was, in the years of his studentship and first practice as a painter, very much what is defined by the word "desultory" (a word which figures in this very sonnet); partly because he disliked routine-work and plodding application, and partly because he was divided between literary and pictorial interests, and often wanted to write when, to all appearance, he ought to have been drawing. I say "to all appearance," because it is now only reasonable to admit that in the long run his readings and writings in these early years proved to be of no less import in his career than drawing-work could have been. This state of things was irritating to our invalided and anxious father, who every now and then found occasion to reprehend Dante sharply, and even severely; and to reprehension my brother was at all times more than sufficiently stubborn. These rifts in cordial family-affection were always distressing when they occurred, though they soon healed over again. My brother, more than our father, was in the wrong; yet not so much in the wrong as at first sight he seemed. He grieved over the matter of our father's displeasure to his dying day.

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Among letters addressed by Rossetti to Madox Brown, the latest which bears the cipher P.R.B. on the envelope is dated before March 1853. It has been stated that in this same year he first definitely decided to adhere to painting as his profession, to the comparative neglect of poetry. Perhaps it was before this, for the phrase "I have abandoned poetry" appears in a Family-letter dated 13 August 1852. An article in the *Athenæum*, 15 September 1894, mentions the fact that at one time he was near to undertaking the work of Telegraphy on the North-Western Railway, owing to his indifferent prospects, some while after the Præraphælite movement began, of making a subsistence as a painter. This, which I had never previously seen stated in print, is correct. I do not remember much in detail about the matter, nor the exact date, which, but for the statement about Præraphælitism, I should have fixed in a still earlier year. Perhaps it was in 1851, or the later part of 1850, when the want of any customer for the "white daub" was becoming irksome. If so, it is curious that the very same picture which first represented Rossetti in the National Gallery had gone nigh to ousting him from the profession. Of course the very straitened money-condition of the family generally was the main consideration. In 1851 there was our father incapacitated; our mother and Christina fagging over an unremunerative attempt at a day-school; Maria giving lessons in Italian etc., at two or three houses; myself with a small salary in the Excise-office, and another smaller stipend from the *Spectator*. I can recollect that Dante Rossetti went round once to some suburban station to see what a telegraph was like. The sight, and the moderate amount of information given to him, afforded him no satisfaction; but, feeling the family difficulties, he did not refuse to entertain the project. For one reason or another, and luckily for all parties concerned—including maybe the railway passengers—it very rapidly came to nothing.

Another curious circumstance is that in October 1849 Rossetti and his associates were pretty near settling in the

house, 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, which he did actually rent from Michaelmas 1862 onwards. Mr. Hunt and Mr. Stephens, along with Rossetti, looked over the house, and were much taken with it. The idea was that some P.R.B.'s and one or two of their closest friends—such as Munro and Deverell—should jointly tenant the house, and set up studios. To inscribe P.R.B. somewhere or other on the premises seemed a *sine qua non*. A suggestion of mine that it might be written near the bell-pull, and interpreted by the uninitiated as "Please Ring Bell," was hailed as an opportune solution of the problem. The rent required was singularly low, £70; but we were so far impecunious that even this was regarded as beyond our conjoint means, and the idea of taking the house only lasted two or three days. It is moreover a fact that the building contained not a single good studio.

This reference to the studio which Rossetti did *not* take after leaving the one which he shared with Hunt in Cleveland Street leads me on to speaking of those which he *did* take. As I said, he was first at No. 72 Newman Street, a house where the ground-floor was occupied as a Dancing-Academy. The Dancing-Master failed to pay his rent; and, according to the oppressive system of those days, the goods of his sub-tenant Rossetti were seized to make good the default. The landlord was Mr. McQueen, a Printer in Tottenham Court Road. Dante and I carried away a considerable number of books, and I suppose some other things as well. This was probably not strictly legal—although, as regards the books, they were in fact as much mine as his, for all books were in common between us. Anyhow, the bulk of Dante's small belongings was confiscated, and appeared to his eyes no more. He then took a studio at No. 74, next door but one. It had a sort of slanting skylight, and few places were dimmer when a brisk rain came down pattering upon the glass. My brother was in this studio (still sleeping at No. 50 Charlotte Street) in October 1850, and perhaps for some while previously. At the beginning of 1851 he took, along with Deverell, the first floor at No. 17 Red Lion Square, a

house which happened to belong to Mr. North, the father of our eccentric literary crony. In May he gave notice to leave this apartment; and he accepted Madox Brown's obliging offer to accommodate him for a while in his own large studio, which was now in the house in Newman Street, No. 17, occupied by the sculptor Baily. Here he sat to Brown for the head of Chaucer in the very large picture—now in the museum of Sydney, Australia—of *Chaucer reading to the Court of Edward 3 the Legend of Custance*. The head was painted in one night, 11 P.M. to 4 A.M., and was never afterwards touched upon. This is recognizably like Chaucer, and is also a very fair portrait of Rossetti. It is held by some writers that Rossetti at this time resembled Chaucer; by others that he was like the Stratford bust of Shakespear; while Mr. Joseph Knight (who knew him later on) considers that the nearest affinity was to the great Italian actor Salvini—and I am more disposed to acquiesce in this last opinion. It was, I gather, on 23 November 1852 that Rossetti finally removed into Chambers of his own, and thus ceased to belong to the household at Charlotte Street, or rather then at Arlington Street. These Chambers were on the second floor of No. 14 Chatham Place, Blackfriars Bridge, a line of street demolished now many years ago. He had a very fine outlook on the river, and remained in this house until after the death of his wife in February 1862. There were a spacious painting-room, a commodious living-room, a small but well-lighted bedroom, and a little dusky passage-room between these two, chiefly used for storing books. In these Chambers I very frequently passed the evening with my brother, going thither from my office at Somerset House. Not seldom, up to the date of his marriage in 1860, I passed the night there as well.



## XVII.

MISS SIDDAL.<sup>1</sup>

DANTE ROSSETTI—though there was nothing of the Puritan in his feelings, nor in his demeanour or conversation—had no juvenile amours, *liaisons*, or flirtations. In 1850 he fell seriously in love.

Outside the compact circle of the Præraphaelite Brotherhood there was no man he liked better than Walter Howell Deverell, a youthful painter, son of the Secretary of the Government Schools of Design—artistic, clever, genial, and remarkably good-looking. One day—early in 1850, if not late in 1849—Deverell accompanied his mother to a bonnet-shop in Cranborne Alley (now gone—close to Leicester Square); and among the shop-assistants he saw a young woman who lifted down a handbox or what not. She was a most beautiful creature, with an air between dignity and sweetness, mixed with something which exceeded modest self-respect, and partook of disdainful reserve; tall, finely formed, with a lofty neck, and regular yet somewhat uncommon features, greenish-blue unsparkling eyes, large perfect eyelids, brilliant complexion, and a lavish heavy wealth of coppery-golden hair. It was what many people call red hair, and abuse under that name—but the colour, when not rank and flagrant, happens to have been always much admired by Dante Rossetti, and I dare say by Deverell as well. All this fine development, and this brilliancy of hue, were only too consistent with a consumptive taint in the constitution. Her voice was clear and low, but with a certain sibilant tendency which reduced its attractiveness. Deverell got his mother to enquire whether he might be privileged to have sittings from this beauty, and the petition was granted. He painted from her the head of Viola in the picture, which he exhibited in the early spring of 1850, from Shakespear's *Twelfth Night*, *The Duke with*

<sup>1</sup> My brother always spelled the name thus. Some members of the family wrote "Siddall."



*Viola listening to the Court Minstrels*; he also drew from her the head of Viola in the etching of *Olivia and Viola* which appeared in the final number of *The Germ*. In the oil-picture Rossetti sat for the head of the Jester. It is a fair likeness, but rather grim.<sup>1</sup> I may as well add here that Hunt, not long afterwards, painted from the same damsel the Sylvia in his picture from the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and Millais his drowning *Ophelia*—but I fancy that both these heads, or at any rate the first, have been a good deal altered at a more recent date. This milliner's girl was Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal. When Deverell first saw her, she was, I believe, not fully seventeen years of age.<sup>2</sup>

The father of Miss Siddal was a Sheffield Cutler (Mr. Stephens says a watchmaker, but I hardly suppose that to be correct), who had removed to the neighbourhood of Newington Butts. His wife was alive in 1850, but not I think himself. I never saw her; but I did see once or twice Elizabeth's younger sister, a pleasing unmarried woman, and once her brother, who seemed a sensible well-conducted man, perhaps a trifle hard in manner. There was also a younger brother, said to be somewhat weak-minded. I find it stated that Mrs. Siddal had in some way been intimately associated with Madox Brown's second wife, a Miss Hill. This must have promoted a more than common cordiality which (after Elizabeth Siddal had, through a different train of circumstances, come into the artistic circle) subsisted between Mrs. Brown and herself, and only terminated with death. A neighbouring tradesman in Newington Butts, in Miss Siddal's infancy or early childhood, was named Greenacre.

<sup>1</sup> This picture, a large one, belonged, some while after Deverell's death, to Mr. Bell Scott. He sold it not very long before his decease, and I do not know who may be its present possessor.

<sup>2</sup> My brother, when his wife died on 11 February 1862, believed her to be twenty-nine years old; but I can distinctly recollect that her younger sister (whom they were wont to call "the Roman," from her aquiline nose, quite different from the rather noticeably rounded one of Elizabeth Eleanor) told him in my presence that the correct age was twenty-eight.

To the British public he is a murderer, more than commonly execrable, and duly hanged. To Miss Siddal he was a good-natured neighbour, who would on occasion help her toddling steps over a muddy or crowded crossing. Such is the difference in "the environment." Miss Siddal—let me say here once for all—was a graceful lady-like person, knowing how to behave in company. She had received an ordinary education, and committed no faults of speech. In our circle she was always termed "Lizzie," and I shall sometimes speak of her under that name.

Not long after Miss Siddal had begun to sit to Deverell, Dante Rossetti saw her, admired her enormously, and was soon in love with her—*how* soon I cannot exactly say. She had a face and demeanour very suitable indeed for a youthful Madonna; but I presume the head of the Virgin in the *Annunciation* picture had been painted before he knew her—and, under any circumstances, he would perhaps have taken this head from Christina, to keep the work in harmony with *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*. The first painting in which I find the head of Miss Siddal is the rich little water-colour of 1850 (presented to Madox Brown) called *Rossovestita* (Red-clad). This is not greatly like Lizzie, but it can hardly have been done from any one else. Soon followed a true likeness in the water-colour, *Beatrice at a Marriage Feast denies Dante her Salutation*, which was exhibited in the winter of 1852-53. Here the Beatrice is Miss Siddal, and *every* other Beatrice he drew for some years following is also, I think, from her—likewise the Virgin in a water-colour of *The Annunciation*, 1852. She is here represented bathing her feet in a rivulet, and the composition bears of course no analogy to that of the oil-picture.

I do not know at what date a definite engagement existed between Miss Siddal and my brother—very probably before or not long after the close of 1851. That she was sincerely in love with him—he being most deeply and profusely in love with her—is readily to be presumed. Her character was somewhat singular—not quite easy to understand, and not

at all on the surface. Often as I have been in her company—and yet this was less often than might under the conditions be surmised—I hardly think that I ever heard her say a single thing indicative of her own character, or of her serious underlying thought. All her talk was of a “chaffy” kind—its tone sarcastic, its substance lightsome. It was like the speech of a person who wanted to turn off the conversation, and leave matters substantially where they stood before. Now and again she said some pointed thing, which might cast a dry light, but ushered one no further. She was not ill-natured in talk, still less was she scandal-mongering, or chargeable with volatility or levity personal to herself; but she seemed to say—“My mind and my feelings are my own, and no outsider is expected to pry into them.” That she had plenty of mind is a fact abundantly evidenced by her designs and water-colours, and by her verses as well. Indeed she was a woman of uncommon capacity and varied aptitude. In what religious denomination she had been brought up I know not. Of her own, I fancy she had no religion. I should feel the more confident of this, were it not that Dante Rossetti, undefined as his faith was, had no sort of liking for irreligion in women. He had even a certain marked degree of prejudice against women who would not believe.

When one wants chivalrous generosity, one goes to Algernon Swinburne for it. This is what he once said of Miss Siddal<sup>1</sup> :—

“It is impossible that even the reptile rancour, the omnivorous malignity, of Iago himself, could have dreamed of trying to cast a slur on the memory of that incomparable lady whose maiden name was Siddal and whose married name was Rossetti. To one at least who knew her better than most of her husband’s friends the memory of all her marvellous charms of mind and person—her matchless

<sup>1</sup> In *The Academy*, 24 December 1892. Mr. Swinburne is here writing about Bell Scott’s *Autobiographical Notes*, and about an interpretation—more or less fanciful—which had been put upon a couple of phrases in that book.





*By Herself.*

ELIZABETH ELEANOR SIDDAL (ROSSETTI).

1853.

grace, loveliness, courage, endurance, wit, humour, heroism, and sweetness—is too dear and sacred to be profaned by any attempt at expression. 'The vilest of the vile could not have dreamed of trying to cast a slur on her memory.'"

In these years, 1850 to 1854, Dante Rossetti was so constantly in the company of Lizzie Siddal that this may even have conduced towards the break-up of the P.R.B. as a society of comrades. He was continually painting or drawing from her, and pretty soon his example and incitement brought her on to designing and painting for herself. He gave her some instruction; but, of systematic training of the ordinary kind, she appears to me to have had scarcely any. Certain it is that she had a gift very superior, in its quality if not in its actual outcome, to that which belongs to most female *débutantes*. The tone of her work was founded on that of Rossetti, with much less draughtsmanship, limper forms, and cruder colour. His own was partly crude, as well as brilliant, in the water-colours to which he chiefly confined himself in these years. On the other hand, she had much of sweet and chastened invention, and an ingenious romantic turn in it as well, and a graceful purity is stamped upon everything she did. One of her first productions was, I think, *We are Seven*, from Wordsworth's poem. It is mentioned in a letter dated 12 January 1853. Then came a pen-and-ink design, rather large, of *Pippa and the Women of loose Life*, from Browning's drama, one of Miss Siddal's best drawings, and in essence a very good one; the water-colour of the Wailing Ladies on the Seashore from the old ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*; another from *St. Agnes' Eve*, by Tennyson; another from the same great poet's *Lady Clare*; and not a few more. Her portrait was painted by herself in 1853-4. It is an absolute likeness, and the readers of this book may judge whether it is a laudable work of art. 'Lizzie,' said my brother, writing to Madox Brown on 25 August 1853, "has made a perfect wonder of her portrait, which is nearly done, and which I think we shall send to the Winter Exhibition." But this, I take it, was not carried out.

And again, in 1854: "Her fecundity of invention and facility are quite wonderful—much greater than mine." This may have been a lover's exaggeration, but it was not mere nonsense. She continued designing and painting for some years, not perhaps to any very large extent beyond 1857. Ill-health interfered, and stopped the settled practice. She did something however even after marriage; for a letter from Rossetti to Mr. Alexander Gilchrist, 18 June 1861, says: "She has been working very hard these few days, and made a beautiful water-colour sketch."

Of her verse—which is but scanty in quantity, so far as any traces remain to me—I will present one specimen. Possibly it had never yet been read by any one out of my family.

#### A YEAR AND A DAY.

Slow days have passed that make a year,  
 Slow hours that make a day,  
 Since I could take my first dear love,  
 And kiss him the old way:  
 Yet the green leaves touch me on the cheek,  
 Dear Christ, this month of May.

I lie among the tall green grass  
 That bends above my head,  
 And covers up my wasted face,  
 And folds me in its bed  
 Tenderly and lovingly  
 Like grass above the dead.

Dim phantoms of an unknown ill  
 Float through my tiring brain;  
 The unformed visions of my life  
 Pass by in ghostly train;  
 Some pause to touch me on the cheek,  
 Some scatter tears like rain.

The river ever running down  
 Between its grassy bed,  
 The voices of a thousand birds  
 That clang above my head,  
 Shall bring to me a sadder dream  
 When this sad dream is dead.



A silence falls upon my heart,  
 And hushes all its pain.  
 I stretch my hands in the long grass,  
 And fall to sleep again,  
 There to lie empty of all love,  
 Like beaten corn of grain.

The letter from which I lately quoted, 25 August 1853, contains the first reference that I find to Miss Siddal's ill-health. It says, following the praise of her portrait, "she has been very ill though lately." The consumptive turn of her constitution became apparent; and from this time forth the letters about her are shadowed with sorrow which often deepens almost into despair. In a letter of March 1854 it is stated that Dante had introduced Lizzie to the Howitts—William and Mary Howitt, with their daughter Anna Mary (the painter, who afterwards became Mrs. Alfred Charles Watts), then living in Highgate Rise; and that the Howitts were quite fond of her, and admired her productions. He had also introduced her to Christina; but was at times a little put out with the latter, thinking that her appreciation of Lizzie was not up to the mark. The Howitts had got her to see Dr. Wilkinson (the distinguished homœopathist and writer), who pronounced that there was curvature of the spine, and the case was an anxious one, but not at all hopeless. From one of the Family-letters, June 1853, it will be observed that she was then painting in the Chatham Place Chambers, while Dante was in Newcastle.

My brother was a lover of boundless enthusiasm and ardour. He made no secret of his condition in the close circle of his nearer intimates. To all other persons he trapped himself in impenetrable silence, not without some defiant tone; and he employed pet names for his fair one, of which Guggum, Guggums, or Gug, was the most frequent, not the most euphonious. His Family-letters bear adequate marks of all this, but more especially his correspondence with Mr. Madox Brown. I observe, from some of her very few still extant letters, that Lizzie also addressed Rossetti

as "Gug." Possibly she invented the term, using it as sort of short for "Gabriel."

I will here finish up with our lovable friend Devereux. He died on 2 February 1854, having for some months previously been a victim to Bright's disease. His age appeared to have been only twenty-six. Had he lived a few years longer, he would not have failed to distinguish himself. Dante Rossetti was his chief intimate, but he was a favourite with all of our circle, and deserved to be so. He painted himself as the Duke in the *Twelfth Night* picture; Mr. Brown painted him finely as the gallant page in the *Chaucer* subject; and Mr. Holman Hunt made a very careful drawing of his handsome head. I cannot remember that my brother ever did the like.

## XVIII.

### JOHN RUSKIN.

THE relation of Mr. Ruskin to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood has often been misunderstood or mis-stated. It has been alleged—and this, in substance, I have already denied—that the young artists who called themselves Pre-Raphaelites were prompted to their enterprise by reading some writings of Ruskin's; also that he encouraged them from the first. This is an error. There is nothing to show that he paid the least attention to their works while these were on exhibition in 1849 and 1850: in 1849, praised for the most part; in 1850, greeted with little other than extreme and envenomed abuse.

In 1851 Rossetti did not contribute to any of the Exhibitions. Sir John Millais sent to the Royal Academy three oil-pictures—*The Woodman's Daughter* (from a poem by Coventry Patmore), *The Return of the Dove to the Ark*, and *Mariana* (from Tennyson). Mr. Holman Hunt sent thither *Valentine rescuing Sylvia from Proteus*. It appears that Mr. Ruskin's father (a wealthy wine-merchant, whom

remember well) liked *The Return of the Dove to the Ark*, and was minded to purchase it; but the picture was already sold. Mr. Patmore suggested to John Ruskin to write something about Millais and Hunt. Ruskin complied; and on 13 May a letter of his appeared in *The Times*, and was no doubt of very high service to the Præraphæclite cause. Neither this letter, nor the pamphlet *Præraphæclitism* published in the same year, referred in any way to the pictures of Rossetti exhibited in the two preceding years. It may be worth observing here that Mr. Ruskin, who was at that time a very earnest Protestant Christian, had had a vague idea, fostered by public rumour, that the Præraphæclites were leagued in some Puseyite or Roman-catholic propaganda. This error was now dispelled from his mind.

The first trace which I find of Ruskin in connexion with Rossetti comes in a letter which my brother addressed to Madox Brown on 1 March 1853. He here speaks of Mr. McCracken, the Belfast Packing-Agent who had bought the *Annunciation* picture, and who was a profound believer in "the Graduate" (as he constantly termed Ruskin); and Rossetti refers to "those sketches now exhibiting"—which were the *Giotto painting the Portrait of Dante*, the *Beatrice at a Marriage-feast denies Dante her Salutation*, and the *Rossovestita*. He then proceeds:—

"Ruskin has written him some extravagant praises (though with obtuse accompaniments) upon one of them—I cannot make out which—and McCracken seems excited, wanting it."

I presume the water-colour in question was most probably the *Beatrice* subject. Afterwards McCracken bought from my brother the water-colour (now in the Fine-Art Gallery of Oxford) named *Dante drawing an Angel in Memory of Beatrice*; and the sequel was this, as noted in another letter to Brown, 14 April 1854:—

"McCracken of course sent my drawing to Ruskin, who the other day wrote me an incredible letter about it, remaining mine respectfully (!), and wanting to call. I of course stroked him down

in my answer, and yesterday he called. His manner was more agreeable than I had always expected. . . . He seems in a measure to make my fortune."

Ruskin was then thirty-five years old, while my brother was not quite twenty-six. He called again very soon afterwards; and my brother was dining with him *en famille* 25 April at Denmark Hill, Camberwell, when he had to be summoned away to attend the death-bed of our father, who expired on the 26th. These were days of great trouble to Dante Rossetti. Immediately after our father's funeral he found it necessary to run down to Hastings for a while, to join Miss Siddal, who was in a very suffering state of health. They were also days of trouble to Mr. Ruskin, for a different sort of reason, on which I need not dwell here. He went abroad much about the same time when my brother left for Hastings, and for three or four months they met no more, but interchanged some letters.

Mr. Ruskin took keen delight in Rossetti's paintings and designs. He praised freely, and abused heartily, both his art and them. The abuse was good-humoured, and was taken good-humouredly; still it was enough to nettle many a nature more enduring than that of Rossetti. Mr. Ruskin found him over-confident in the use of unsafe pigments, capricious in his character and his products, and careless of his surroundings: his room was never orderly. Dante Rossetti, like most artists of any inventive genius, was at bottom scornful of art-critics. He was not in the least self-satisfied as to his own performances—on the contrary, he looked up at most of them with a good deal of disfavour, as being inadequate expressions of the adequate idea which was within him; still he considered that an artist generally knows what he is about much better than an outsider can instruct him. Besides, the idea, and the method of presenting it, were his own, and, for better or worse, his own they must remain. I consider that in these years there was no irritation whatever between Ruskin and Rossetti. They were heart

friendly, and indeed heartily affectionate, and took in good part, with mutual banter and amusement, whatever was deficient or excessive in the performances of the painter, or in the comments of the purchaser and critic. The only counteraction to their entire cordiality lay in the fact that Madox Brown soon got to hate the very name of Ruskin. He considered himself both slighted and damnified by the absolute silence which that pre-eminent and most influential art-critic, in all his published writings, preserved as to Brown's works, while lauding some other painters who might be deemed fully equal to himself, and several who were most manifestly inferior. Rossetti, who was zealous in friendship, endeavoured to bring about a different condition of things, but did not succeed; so he had, in some degree, to steer a middle course between his warm feelings for Brown on one side and for Ruskin on the other. Ruskin and Rossetti saw each other constantly, and kept up an active correspondence as well. The letters of the former are still rather numerous, and are full of diverting "digs" at Rossetti's designs and paintings. Rossetti's responses are not within my cognizance, but, if they did not "give as good as he got," I have misapprehended his character, and his settled habits of mind and act.

From an early date in their acquaintance Mr. Ruskin undertook to buy, if he happened to like it, whatever Rossetti produced, at a range of prices such as the latter would have asked from any other purchaser, and up to a certain maximum of expenditure on his own part. If he did not relish a work, Rossetti could offer it to any one else. I cannot imagine any arrangement more convenient to my brother, who thus secured a safe market for his performances, and could even rely upon not being teased to do on the nail work for which he received payment in whole or in part. In this respect Ruskin appears to have been always friendly and accommodating, and Rossetti not unduly troublesome. He availed himself of Ruskin's easy liberality, without abusing it. In fact he was made comfortable in his professional

in the matter, and may have had much to do with his resolve.

Ruskin's permanent opinion of Rossetti as a painter appears in the following words :—

"I believe Rossetti's name should be placed first on the list of men, within my own range of knowledge, who have raised and changed the spirit of modern art; raised in absolute attainment, changed in direction of temper."

And again :—

"Rossetti was the chief intellectual force in the establishment of the modern Romantic School in England."

I will extract here a few passages from the letters which Mr. Ruskin wrote to my brother. They are scrappy, but tend to show how the two very diverse natures were getting on together; and here and there comes a touch of that tender and exquisite amiability which has made Ruskin (if his genius had not done it for him) a man apart. He hardly ever dated his letters; but I shall add dates which are nearly enough right for the present purpose.

(October 1854) "I forgot to say also that I really do covet your drawings as much as I covet Turner's; only it is useless self-indulgence to buy Turner's, and useful self-indulgence to buy yours. Only I won't have them after they have been more than nine times rubbed entirely out—remember that."—(24 April 1855) "It may be as well that you should keep this letter, if you *can* keep anything safe in that most disreputable litter of yours."—(June 1855) "At the eleventh hour I am going to put off my lesson of to-morrow [*i.e.*, a little friendly instruction, pretty frequently repeated, which, at Mr. Ruskin's request, Rossetti gave him in the use of water-colour. I

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drawing to finish; you will still be kept in town not my lesson when this nasty etching is done."—(July 18 dine with us on Thursday at 6? (and not be too P.R. is coming too!). But I've no other time for a chat. 1855) "Please oblige me in two matters, or you" again. "Take all the pure green out of the flesh I send, and try to get it a little less like worsted-wo day. I want *The Passover* in such a state as it may sketch of *Passover*."—(November 1855) "It's all y not a bit of fine feeling, so don't think it. If you w me, you would keep your room in order, and go to be your fine speeches go for nothing with me till you d 1856) "I forgot to say to you when I saw you th there is anything in which I can be of any use to M have only to tell me. I mean, she might be able, a weather comes finer, to come out here sometimes to the garden, and feel the quiet fresh air, and look at a and she shall have the run of the house. And, if would like an Albert Durer or a photograph for merely tell me, and I will get them for her. And I you about her, because you seem to me to let her w with fancies, and she really ought to be made to draw sometimes from dull things."—(January 1857) "I was as you must have seen, for I can't hide it when I am at all like my picture now [*possibly* the oil-picture of —a mediaeval painter painting a lady as this saint]. of the head from the stoop forward to the throw b whole figure quite stiff and stupid; besides, the quarter of a yard too thin. That *Magdalene* is mag mind in every possible way; it stays by me." [This *The Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee*.]

In one of these passages the reader will have reference to Miss Siddal. Soon after Ruskin



to London from his visit to the Continent in 1854, Rossetti brought him acquainted with Miss Siddal, and with the designs and water-colours she was producing. Ruskin admired her much, and liked her intensely; and he took a most hearty interest and pleasure in the refinement and feeling displayed in her designs, although far from blind (as will have been perceived) to their executive shortcomings. A letter from Rossetti to Madox Brown, 13 April 1855, says that she and he had been spending a day at the house of the Ruskin family :—

“All the Ruskins were most delighted with Guggum. John Ruskin said she was a noble, glorious creature, and his father said by her look and manner she might have been a Countess.”

Immediately afterwards Mr. Ruskin committed one of those unnumbered acts of generosity by which he will be remembered hardly less long than by his vivid insight into many things, and his heroic prose. He wanted to effect one of two plans for her advantage—either to purchase all her drawings one by one, as they should be produced, or else to settle on her an annual £150—he taking in exchange her various works up to that value, and retaining them, or (if preferred) selling some of them, and handing over to her any extra proceeds. This latter plan was carried into actual effect by 3 May. It will easily and rightly be supposed that Rossetti used to find funds for Miss Siddal whenever required; but his means were both small and fitful, and Ruskin's scheme was of some relief and of great satisfaction to him. How long it continued I am not sure. There is a letter from Mr. Ruskin, dated I fancy in or about 1857, containing the following passage, which I need only preface by saying that he constantly applied the fancy-name “Ida” to Miss Siddal, taking it no doubt from Tennyson's *Princess* :—

“I shall rejoice in Ida's success with her picture, as I shall in every opportunity of being useful either to you or her. The only feeling I have about the matter is of some shame at having allowed



the arrangement between us to end as it did ; and the chief pleasure I could have about it now would be her simply accepting it as she would have accepted a glass of water when she was thirsty, and never thinking of it any more."

From this I infer that Miss Siddal had then discontinued delivering her designs or paintings to Mr. Ruskin—probably because her very frail state of health prevented her producing them with any regularity ; and that, being thus unable to fulfil her part in the scheme, she, and also my brother as her adviser, renounced the money-benefit hence accruing to her.

Meantime, for health's sake, she had been abroad. I have already referred to the medical opinion obtained from Dr. Wilkinson. Towards June 1855 another opinion was obtained from Dr. Acland of Oxford, to whom Ruskin recommended her. The Doctor and others, including a lady of the Pusey family, received her with great attentions. He opined that her lungs were nearly right, the chief danger consisting in "mental power long pent up, and lately overtaxed." He advised her to leave England before cold weather set in ; and this she did towards the latter end of September, having as companion a Mrs. Kincaid, a cousin of ours, who knew something of French and Continental life. This lady was only recently known to us. She had (I think) been discovered by my uncle Henry Polydore as being a member of the Pierce family, at a time when, in consequence of an informality in the will of my grand-aunt Harriet Pierce (who died in 1849), it became requisite to ferret out her various next of kin. I remember Mrs. Kincaid pretty well towards 1855—a matronly sort of person, aged forty or upwards ; her husband much better, a sharp-looking solicitor. He took a decided fancy to Dante Rossetti, and haunted not a little his studio and his dinner-hour—his dinner, while he tenanted his Chambers in Chatham Place, being almost invariably taken at some eating-house. Miss Siddal with Mrs. Kincaid went to Nice ; she was also for a while in Paris, and Dante, with his friend

Munro, saw her there in connexion with the Great Exhibition of that year, he returning in October. For some reason or other—I am not sure that I ever understood it well—she lost her liking for Mrs. Kincaid. Dante of course sided with Lizzie, and we saw the married couple no more. It may have been in the late Spring of 1856 that Miss Siddal returned to London, without any such material renovation of health as had been hoped for. From this time onward variations occurred at intervals; but as a whole it must be said that there was a continual decline of vital force, and often she was distressingly ill.

I may here add that my own first sight of Mr. Ruskin was on 25 November 1854, when he was delivering a lecture at the Architectural Museum. I afterwards saw him pretty frequently, often in company with my brother, and I regarded him with warm liking and respect both as man and as writer and critic. As a public speaker, Ruskin was a subject of highest admiration to my brother, who never, I think, addressed a general audience at all. That Rossetti wholly avoided and shrank from any such form of self-display is certain. It is not by any means equally certain to me that, if he had chosen to make the attempt, he would not or could not have succeeded. His address was good, his voice excellent, his manner adapted for exciting sympathy and warmth, his ideas were clear and well to hand, and he could converse extremely well whenever he liked.

Some years ago a copy of a letter from my brother to Mr. McCracken, 15 May 1854, came into my hands. It shows so clearly the opinion which he entertained upon various questions of art, about the time when he first knew Ruskin, that I shall here introduce a few sentences of it:—

“I believe colour to be a quite indispensable quality in the *highest* art, and that no picture ever belonged to the highest order without it; while many, by possessing it—as the works of Titian—are raised certainly into the highest *class*, though not to the very highest grade of that class, in spite of the limited degree of their other great qualities. Perhaps the *only* exception which I should be inclined to

omit exists in the works of Hogarth, to which I should never dare assign any but the very highest place, though their colour is certainly not a prominent feature in them. I must add however that Hogarth's colour is seldom other than pleasing to myself, and that for my own part I should almost call him a colourist, though not aiming at colour. On the other hand, there are men who, solely on account of bad colour, prevent me from thoroughly enjoying their works, though full of other qualities. For instance, Wilkie, or Delaroche (in nearly all his works, though the *Hémicycle* fine in colour). From Wilkie I would at any time prefer a thoroughly good engraving—though of course he is in no respect even within hail of Hogarth. Colour is the physiognomy of a picture; and, like the shape of the human forehead, it cannot be perfectly beautiful without proving goodness and greatness. Other qualities are its life exercised; but this is the body of its life, by which we know and love it at first sight. . . . I have once seen a small picture by the H. Wallis you ask about, and should venture to say that any work of his must have some degree of value, if not a very high one—at any rate something preferable to any *Mill* by any standard, to any 'vacant' thing whatever by John Bridges, or even anything I could suppose likely to fall under Redgrave's notice while 'returning from church.'"

## XIX.

## WORK IN 1854-55-56.

In these years the painting-work of Rossetti had its source principally in Dantesque or in general romantic themes, with some sacred subjects interspersed, and his method was water-colour. He produced a triptych of *Paolo and Francesca*; *The Passover in the Holy Family*; a portrait of himself; *Uncle Tom and Guenevere at the Tomb of Arthur*; a head of a woman, a fine likeness, doing justice to so great a sitter; *The Chapel before the Lists*; *Dante's Dream*; the five signs to Tennyson's *Poems*; *Eliza Polidori* (oil-portrait); *The Blue Closet*; *The Wedding of St. George*; *Bonifazio's Mistress*; *The Tune of Seven Towers*; and several other

works. Some of them were prolonged into the year 1857. He also made the water-colour preparatory to his oil-triptych for Llandaff Cathedral—*The Seed of David*. Mr. Ruskin became the owner of a good proportion of these productions—by no means of all.

Rossetti's invention was fertile, and—according to the varying and sometimes merely fanciful themes—appropriate; his colour high and brilliant, and, though at times a little over-positive, not forced. Allowing himself very free scope in his treatment of the subjects, he yet seldom if ever painted a figure without taking it from Nature. Miss Siddal was his model for all the leading female personages. Of thoughtfully considered or elaborately realized light and shade, or of diversified planes in the composition, there is very little in any of these works. Rossetti's sympathies did not go in such directions, and he was never an adept at these highly important processes of the art—and at this period still less an adept than he became later on.

To some of the above-named works a few details may here be spared.

The *Paolo and Francesca* triptych, begun as a design in October 1849, shows the Lovers' Kiss, and their souls in Hell, and in the centre Dante or some other figure. He repeated these compositions more than once. Mr. James Leathart, of Gateshead-on-Tyne, owns the best version of them, and a very fine example it is of Rossetti's power in pathos and in colour. *The Passover in the Holy Family*, a prime favourite with Mr. Ruskin, had also been invented as far back as July 1849. This likewise was intended to be part of a triptych; the other subjects were to be—*The Virgin planting a Lily and a Rose*, and *The Virgin in the House of John*. The central subject remained uncompleted, though moderately advanced; the second was (I think) never done; the third was eventually treated as a separate water-colour painting, one of his very best. The portrait of Rossetti himself, in Indian ink executed with pen or brush, is dated 20 September 1855, and is now the property of Mr. Charles Fairfax Murray.

I think it superior to all other renderings, and, by Mr. Murray's obliging permission, it forms our frontispiece. The *Dante's Dream*, which was purchased by Miss Heaton of Leeds (who died at Christmas 1894), is the same subject as the large oil-picture now in the Walker Gallery of Liverpool, but not at all the same composition.

The Tennyson designs, which were engraved on wood, and published in the Illustrated Tennyson in which Millais, Hunt, Mulready, and others, co-operated, have in the long run done not a little to sustain my brother's reputation with the public. At the time they gave him endless trouble, and small satisfaction. Not indeed that the invention or the mere designing of these works was troublesome to him. He took great pains with them, but, as what he wrought at was always something which informed and glowed in his mind, he was not more troubled by these than by other drawings. It must be said also that himself only, and not Tennyson, was his guide. He drew just what he chose, taking from his author's text nothing more than a hint and an opportunity. The trouble came in with the engraver and the publisher. With some of the doings of the engraver—Dalziel, not Linton whom he found much more conformable to his notion—he was grievously disappointed. He probably exasperated Dalziel, and Dalziel certainly exasperated him. Blocks were re-worked upon, and proofs sent back with rigour. The publisher Mr. Moxon was a still severer affliction. He called and he wrote. Rossetti was not always up to time, though he tried his best to be so. In other instances he was up to time, but his engraver was not up to his mark. I believe that poor Moxon suffered much, and soon afterwards he died; but I do not lay any real blame upon my brother, who worked strenuously and well. As to our great poet Tennyson—who also ought to have counted for something in the whole affair—I gather that he really liked Rossetti's designs when he saw them, and he was not without a perceptible liking and regard for Rossetti himself, so far as he knew him (they had first met at Mr. Patmore's house in December 1849); but

the illustration of *St. Cecilia* puzzled him not a little, and he had to give up the problem of what it had to do with his verses. If I may be allowed to express my opinion of so great a man as Tennyson—whom I met on several occasions, and who honoured me by much freedom of converse—I should say that he had not any particular insight into matters of pictorial art as such, although he appreciated and prized the art as one of the forms in which the mind of man expresses beautiful ideas. I did not observe him to be at all a "connoisseur." Rossetti put this affair of the wood-blocks in entertaining terms in a letter to Mr. Bell Scott dated February 1857:—

"I have designed five blocks for 'Tennyson, some of which are still cutting and maiming. It is a thankless task. After a fortnight's work my block goes to the engraver, like Agag delicately, and is hewn to pieces before the Lord Harry.

"ADDRESS TO THE DALZIEL BROTHERS.

"O Woodman, spare that block,  
Oh gash not anyhow!  
It took ten days by clock,  
I'd fain protect it now.

"Chorus—Wild Laughter from Dalziel's Workshop."

As I am here speaking of Tennyson, I take occasion to mention two sketches of him which my brother made; not of superior import as works of art, yet from all points of view highly interesting. It was on 27 September 1855 that the Brownings, being then for a while in London, invited two or three friends to the house they were occupying, 13 Dorset Street, to meet Tennyson, who had undertaken to read aloud his poem of *Maud*, recently published. The audience was a small one, the privilege accorded to each individual all the higher: Mr. and Mrs. Browning, Miss Browning, my brother, and myself, and I think there was one more—either Madox Brown, or else Hunt or Woolner. The latter had returned to London from Australia in the autumn of 1854. Tennyson,

seated on a sofa in a characteristic attitude, and holding the volume near his eyes (for he was decidedly short-sighted, though one would hardly think so from his descriptive poems), read *Maud* right through. My brother made two pen-and-ink sketches of him, and gave one of them to Browning. So far as I remember, the Poet Laureate neither saw what Dante was doing, nor knew of it afterwards. His deep grand voice, with slightly chaunting intonation, was a noble vehicle for the perusal of mighty verse. On it rolled, sonorous and emotional. Rossetti, according to Mr. Hall Caine, spoke of the incident in these terms: "I once heard Tennyson read *Maud*; and, whilst the fiery passages were delivered with a voice and vehemence which he alone of living men can compass, the softer passages and the songs made the tears course down his cheeks." I remember that on a later occasion Tennyson told me that he knew no one so well-fitted as himself for reading Milton aloud; as he had a deep chest and long-drawn breath, and could finish the weighty periods of many lines together without a second inhalation. After Tennyson and *Maud* came Browning and *Fra Lippo Lippi*—read with as much of sprightly variation as there was in Tennyson of sustained continuity. Truly a night of the gods, not to be remembered without pride and pang.

*The Seed of David* was an important matter in my brother's professional life. The Cathedral at Llandaff was in 1856 undergoing a complete restoration. One of the Architects employed was Mr. John P. Seddon, who had already become, and always continued, a very steady friend to Rossetti, alert in promoting his interests whenever he could. A painting was wanting for the reredos of the renewed Cathedral; and Mr. John Seddon, seconded by his elder brother Thomas the painter, bethought himself of Rossetti. Mr. Thomas Seddon had lately been abroad in the East with Mr. Holman Hunt, and had painted, among other things, an admirably faithful view of Jerusalem, which is now in the National Gallery, consigned thither by a public subscription in which my brother bore an active part. This subscription took place after the

melancholy death of Mr. Seddon in Cairo, to which city he had gone in the autumn of 1856. There he died of dysentery very soon after his arrival, and a life full of brightness, and a career full of high promise, were suddenly cut short at an early age of thirty-five. In March 1856, prior to starting for Egypt, Mr. Thomas Seddon brought round to Rossetti's studio a Member of Parliament connected with Llandaff, Mr. Henry Austin Bruce (the late Lord Aberdare); and it was agreed that my brother should undertake the painting of a fresco for a sum of £400. The subject—named by him *The Seed of David*, though other titles have often been applied to it—had to take the form of a triptych. In the centre was the Infant Christ adored by a Shepherd and a King; on each side His ancestor the shepherd David standing forth to battle with Goliath; on the other side, the same ancestor as King harping to the glory of Jehovah. The work was completed in 1864, and continues to occupy its place in the Cathedral.

The water-colours of *The Blue Closet*, *The Wedding of George*, and *The Tune of Seven Towers*, bring us into a different relation of life and work. They may be referred to that phase of Rossetti's painting which more especially fostered his connexion with certain young men—now of world-wide fame—at Oxford University, and which led to his own pictorial experiments in Oxford. One of the young men, William Morris, took from Rossetti, as titles for poems, the first and the third of these titles for pictures: the poems however are not founded on the pictures in any material degree. Both pictures and poems are pure phantasies, and independent phantasies.

To some eyes Rossetti's chivalric-romantic inventions are mere knell-echoes of chivalry, or mere fleeting suggestions of romance. It is interesting to observe what was one quarter in which they were very differently construed. There was a deeply devout Methodist, James Smetham, who was also painter. Painting was his profession and his enjoyment; religion was his life. He produced many works, not of large dimension, full of fine threads of imagination, and of refined



though not powerful art. He is at present better known by his remarkable Letters, published in 1892. He appears to have seen something of Rossetti in 1843, at Cary's Academy; again after 1851; and more especially from 1863 through all the ensuing years, until his own mental and physical breakdown, owing to overstrained religious notions, withdrew him from all society. This, expressed in a letter of December 1865, is what he thought of Rossetti's works of the class referred to:—

"Your St. Georges and Sir Galahads are almost the only modern pictures of heroes that reach the Christian ideal, in my judgment, as to expression. Not to be invidious in naming artists, the modern knight is a proud, vain, truculent rascal. Yours are 'renewed in the spirit of their minds'—couldn't do a mean or wrong thing—fear nothing and nobody; but would not hurt a fly or strike an unnecessary blow. So I greatly esteem and respect them."

An earlier letter, September 1860, relates in detail to the water-colour lately mentioned of *The Wedding of St. George*:—

"One of the grandest things, like a golden dim dream. Love 'credulous all gold,' gold armour, a sense of secret enclosure in 'palace-chambers far apart'; but quaint chambers in quaint palaces, where angels creep in through sliding-panel doors, and stand behind rows of flowers, drumming on golden bells, with wings crimson and green. There was also a queer remnant of a dragon's head which he had brought up in a box."

As to writing, there was not in these years anything of such importance as to claim record here. Dante Rossetti adhered faithfully to his resolve that he would for the present be a painter and not a poet.

## XX.

OXFORD MEN AND WORK—BURNES-JONES, MORRIS,  
SWINBURNE.

THE circle of Rossetti's intimacies had gradually changed, and by the middle of 1856 a new and stimulating environ-

ment was his. I will go back upon my steps a little, prior to going forward again.

As friends towards the year 1847 I specified the Heimanns, Munro, Major Calder Campbell, and Bell Scott. Then came Madox Brown, Hunt, and Millais; and, in the train of the last two, the other Præraphaelites—Collinson, Woolner, and Stephens, along with Deverell and the Tupper, or more especially John L. Tupper. There were also—William North; James Hannay; the Seddons, with the portrait-painter Lowes Dickinson, and the glass-painter John R. Clayton; the Howitts and Miss Barbara Leigh Smith (Mrs. Bodichon); the Patmores, along with the Orme family (Mrs. Orme being sister to Mrs. Patmore), and the Irish poet William Allingham; the painters George Price Boyce and Arthur Hughes; and the Brownings. Then came Ruskin and his connexion—including the Working Men's College, in which my brother took a drawing-class for two or three years, ending towards the close of 1858. Madox Brown then conducted it for a while; yet Rossetti's link with the College was not entirely broken, and he was still doing something there in February 1862.

Some of these were now dead: Deverell, North, and Thomas Seddon. Major Campbell and the first Mrs. Patmore did not long survive. Others, for one reason or another, had passed wholly or chiefly out of my brother's ken—Millais, Collinson, and the hospitable Orme family. Hannay, the brilliant novelist, writer, and talker, was now or soon afterwards settled in Edinburgh, with his beautiful and admirable wife (highly valued by Rossetti), and his young family. The Brownings were mostly in Florence, John Seddon in Wales, Allingham in Ireland, and Scott in Newcastle. Hunt, owing to his absences in the East and other circumstances, was not very often seen; nor yet the Heimanns, Stephens, Tupper, Dickinson, Clayton, the Howitts, Miss Barbara Smith, or Patmore. There remained Madox Brown and Ruskin constantly but separately; Munro, Woolner, and Boyce, pretty frequently. Of course there were others as well, but hardly

any who counted as more than casual and pleasant acquaintances. Robert Brough, Charles Bagot Cayley, Whitley Stokes, and George Augustus Sala, were among these.

The first mention which I find of Burne-Jones—the Sir Edward Burne-Jones of our present day—is in a letter from my brother to Brown, dated 6 June 1856. This young Oxford student—a Birmingham man destined for the Church, but with a strong bias towards art, which found vent at this time in romantic pen-and-ink designs of remarkable richness and quality—had conceived a high idea of Rossetti's powers. He called upon him, showed a design or two, and was forthwith recognized by Rossetti—with an instinctive power, in which he had few rivals, of seeing at a glance what is intrinsically excellent, as well as what is predestined to remain second-rate—as a born artist of quite exceptional faculty, and capable of doing consummate work. He urged Mr. Jones to become a professional painter. Jones obeyed the external, and also the internal, monitor, and the world is the richer for his decision.

Through Burne-Jones my brother soon came to know William Morris, and soon afterwards—but this I think was only in Oxford—Algernon Charles Swinburne. It is a natural temptation to say something in detail about these three most highly distinguished men—their looks in youth, their character, demeanour, and attainments. I shall however forbear. Their personality, along with their work, forms part of the annals of England, and indeed of Europe, in the nineteenth century, and my hand might prove infirm to limn them as they were and are.

Prior to his knowledge of Burne-Jones, my brother had already been invited to take some part in art-work in Oxford. In 1855 the Oxford Museum was in course of erection, much under the influence of Mr. Ruskin, and his theories in architecture and decoration; and the architect, Mr. Benjamin Woodward, in July 1855, asked Rossetti to do some of the designing-work in connexion with it. Mr. Woodward was an Irishman, of excellent ability and highly refined taste.

He was the very reverse of what Irishmen are currently assumed to be, and was (without any exception, unless it be that of Mr. Cayley, the translator of Dante, Petrarca, and Homer) the most modest, retiring, and shyly taciturn man of noticeable talent whom it has ever been my fortune to meet. He was of handsome and rather stately presence, eminently gentle and courteous. His health was poor, and he died in 1861, when he had barely attained middle age. Among other edifices, he built a very elegant Insurance-office, in Venetian Gothic, almost opposite my brother's Chambers in Chatham Place. It has long been demolished, and London contains perhaps nothing equal to it in its own way. I do not think that my brother did anything for the Oxford Museum, to which some of his friends contributed statues--Woolner being the sculptor of Lord Bacon, Munro of Galileo, and John Tupper of Linnæus, a work of observably faithful naturalism. Rossetti however soon undertook some work for another Oxford structure with which Mr. Woodward was concerned, the Union Debating-rooms. The proposal was Rossetti's own. He had accompanied Mr. Woodward to the building at the outset of the Long Vacation of 1857, and he thought the bays of the Debating-room would be suitable for wall-paintings, and suggested that they should be covered with tempera-pictures from the Romance of King Arthur. This was not a specially appropriate theme, but Rossetti had not at that time any very clear notion of the purpose which the room was to serve. Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is a book to which, so far as memory serves me, he had not paid any marked attention in earlier years. Perhaps Mr. Morris, rather than his self-directed readings, had impressed its interest upon him, and Morris, at the same time as Rossetti, offered to paint something in the Union Room. At any rate my brother was now in a vigorously Arthurian mood, which lasted some years, and never left him entirely.

Mr. (Lord) Bowen was then the President of the Union, and took an active part in bringing the project to bear. Rossetti gave his work gratis, lasting for several months,

beginning in that Long Vacation, and so did the other artists who co-operated with him; but all costs, including travelling expenses and the living of the artists (or of those who were not Oxford residents), were borne by the Society; and I have understood that—as the young men made themselves much at their ease—these charges finally amounted to a heavy sum, more very possibly than would have been demanded and paid as mere commissions for painting.

Rossetti's work in the Union Building was done after he had contributed something to a monthly publication, *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, in which Morris was a leading writer. This serial, under the editorship of the Rev. William Fulford, was started in January 1856, and lasted a year. Towards the summer of 1856 Rossetti published here *The Burden of Nineveh*, and *The Staff and Scrip*; he also re-printed *The Blessed Damozel*, slightly altered from the form which it bore in *The Germ*. Most readers may agree with me in thinking that all these three poems are among the very best that Rossetti ever produced. *The Burden of Nineveh* was begun, and probably completed, in the autumn of 1850; *The Staff and Scrip* may date in 1852. *The Nineveh* struck Ruskin most forcibly, and he wrote the following letter:—

"DEAR ROSSETTI, --

"I am wild to know who is the author of *The Burden of Nineveh*, in No. 8 of *Oxford and Cambridge*. It is glorious. Please find out for me, and see if I can get acquainted with him."

The uncertainty here expressed appears, from the concluding phrase, to be genuine, but it was hardly needful. Rossetti must of course have written back that *he* was the author; and I fancy that a very large "Bravo!" which forms the commencement of another letter from Mr. Ruskin may be the response to this avowal. The word is shaped out of a series of notes of admiration.

For the painting-work at the Union Rossetti associated several young painters with himself besides Morris—Burne-

Jones, Arthur Hughes, Valentine Prinsep (whom he got to know about this time, visiting at the pleasant and fashionable residence of his parents, Little Holland House), Spencer Stanhope, and J. Hungerford Pollen. He asked Bell Scott to join, but this did not take effect. Munro carved in stone, from a design by Rossetti, the bas-relief of the tympanum, *King Arthur and the Round Table*. Rossetti undertook a large subject, *Sir Launcelot before the Shrine of the Sangrael*; and, at a later date, a second, *Sir Galahad receiving the Sangrael*. Some good work was done in the room, and some other work which, without being exactly good, was at least interesting and noticeable; but the whole affair ended in material failure. Not one of these artists knew much—hardly one of them anything—about wall-painting. They worked with reckless self-confidence, and one might almost say upon a mere system of "happy-go-lucky." The walls were new, and not properly prepared—not even flattened. The tempera-process adopted was little more than water-colour painting, and of course the pictures flaked off—becoming a phantom, and then a wreck. After a while things did not go entirely smooth with the Union Committee. Most of the pictures—including the two by Rossetti—were not brought to completion. In 1869 Mr. Thursfield renewed negotiations. They were entertained with some good-will, but came to nothing. Before this, a local painter had been called in, and tried his hand. That also proved to be in vain; and for many years past the painted surface of the Union walls has been a confused hybrid between a smudge and a blank.

There is a letter from my brother to Madox Brown, which forecasts one of the morals of this enterprise. He says that he is doing the work in a more painstaking method than he had anticipated. "It is very jolly work in itself, but really one is mad to do such things."

If I am not mistaken, it was while Rossetti was painting in the Union room that an under-graduate, looking equally youthful and brilliant, came forward, and was introduced to

the painter, or possibly introduced himself. This was Algernon Charles Swinburne. So my brother's sojourn in Oxford had at least one good result—that of bringing him into personal contact, and soon into very intimate friendship, with the greatest figure in our poetical literature since the advent of Tennyson and of Browning. Mr. Swinburne dedicated to him his first volume, *The Queen Mother, and Rosamund*; Mr. Morris the like with *The Defence of Guenevere, and other Poems*. In fact Rossetti was now in the position of what the French term a *Chef d'École*. He had not only borne a leading part in founding and guiding the Præraphaelite movement, but he had formed a totally different group of believing admirers in the very diverse centre of Oxford University. It has been stated that Rossetti called Mr. Morris "the greatest literary identity of our time," and Mr. Swinburne "highest in inexhaustible splendour of execution." I do not know where these expressions occur; but can believe that they intimate exactly, or pretty nearly, what he felt on the subject.

Another incident of importance took place in Oxford. I give some details which I find in Mr. Scott's book, and I regard them as correct. The Union artists, or some of them, went to the Oxford Theatre one evening, and saw, in the front box above them, a very youthful lady whose aspect fascinated them all. My brother was the first to observe her. Her face was at once tragic, mystic, passionate, calm, beautiful, and gracious—a face for a sculptor, and a face for a painter—a face solitary in England, and not at all like that of an Englishwoman, but rather of an Ionian Greek. It was not a face for that large class of English people who only take to the "pretty," and not to the beautiful or superb. Her complexion was dark and pale, her eyes a deep penetrating grey, her massive wealth of hair gorgeously rippled, and tending to black, yet not without some deep-sunken glow. Soon she was traced to be Miss Burden, daughter of a business-man in the University-city. My brother obtained the privilege of painting from her, and several of his paintings

and designs in Oxford bear trace of her countenance. In later years hers was the ideal face which speaks to you out of very many of his principal works. Others among the Oxford band of painters secured the like privilege; and soon Miss Burden became Mrs. William Morris. If Rossetti had done nothing else in painting (and some people seem to suppose, most erroneously, that he *did* little else) except the ideal, and also very real, transcription of this unique type of female beauty, he might still, on that ground alone, survive in the chronicles of the art.

In 1857 a semi-public exhibition, which came to be termed "the Præraphæclite Exhibition," was got up at No. 4 Russell Place, Fitzroy Square (now embodied in Charlotte Street). My brother contributed to it the water-colours of *Dante's Dream*, *Dante drawing an Angel in Memory of Beatrice*, *Mary Nazarene* (which is I suppose the *Annunciation* water-colour previously mentioned), and *The Blue Closet*; along with *Hesperia Rosa*, and *The Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee*—being presumably the pen-and-ink designs—and photographs of the Tennyson designs, taken before the engraving process. This small display, by himself and his colleagues, excited a considerable amount of attention, more among those critics and visitors who were well-disposed towards the school than among those who were hostile. It served to confirm the impression that something was still going on in the country very different from what could be seen in the ordinary picture-shows. Other contributors were Messrs. Millais, Hunt, Brown, Hughes, Inchbold, Collins, Brett, William Davis, and Windus, with the late Thomas Seddon.

Miss Siddal's health continued a subject of great anxiety in these years, and she repaired to one or another health-resort from time to time—Dante Rossetti joining her there. In one instance they were in Bath (I think towards the end of 1856); in a second instance, 1857-8, at Matlock, where they made a stay of several months, getting on towards a year. In February 1857 there was a scheme of a sort of



joint establishment, or "College," for various artists. Burne-Jones and Morris entered into the project, and at least one other painter was proposed, besides Rossetti, who was under the impression that, before the plan could take actual effect, he and Lizzie would be married. He found however, on speaking to her, that she was decidedly indisposed to enter into any plan which would domicile her in the same place with the third painter here referred to; and Rossetti himself, writing to Madox Brown, said—"I do not think he has lately acted as a friend towards me in her regard." These are circumstances which I need not speak of further, and indeed they are not clearly within my knowledge or recollection. The project never came to anything; nor was it perchance, in itself, a very feasible one.

Those readers who have perused Mr. Bell Scott's book with diligence will have observed in it a letter from Mr. Holman Hunt written within a few days after the close of my brother's life. It contains the following passage:—

"Rossetti's death is ever in my mind. . . . I had long ago forgiven him, and forgotten the offence, which in fact, taken altogether, worked me good rather than harm. Indeed, I had intended in recent times to call upon him. . . . Our talk over the past is deferred until our meeting in the Elysian Fields, when . . . we may talk over back history as having nothing in it not atoned for and wiped out long ago, and as having value only as experience which has done its work in making us both wiser and better."

I understand perfectly well what it is that Mr. Hunt terms "the offence," but will not dwell upon any details; only remarking that, if my reader chooses to ask the old question "Who was the woman?" he will not be far wrong, though his query may chance to remain for ever unanswered. She was not any person whose name occurs in these pages. The incident belongs to the year 1857. It behoves me to add that Mr. Hunt was wholly blameless in this matter; not so my brother, who was properly, though I will not say very deeply, censurable. This transaction left no trace in his after career.

## XXI.

## WORK IN 1858-59.

THE tale of work in these years is not very extensive ; but naturally some things were going on which have been previously mentioned—more especially the Triptych for Ilandaff Cathedral. There were—the pen-and-ink design of *Hamlet and Ophelia* ; the water-colour *Mary in the House of John* ; *Salutatio Beatricis*, representing Dante meeting Beatrice in Florence, and in the Garden of Eden, painted in oil in a week on a door in Mr. Morris's residence, The Red House, Upton, near Bexley Heath, Woolwich ; a water-colour, *A Christmas Carol*, in which a lady is shown chaunting as her hair is combed out ; and a small oil-picture, *Bocca Baciata*. Some other examples can be here passed over ; though I might specify the very beautiful head, Indian ink, of Mrs. Morris, before her marriage, entitled *Queen Guenevere*, and now in the Dublin National Gallery.

"*Bocca Baciata*" is a phrase occurring in Boccaccio, meaning "kissed mouth," or "a mouth that has been kissed." This picture, a very complete and elegant specimen of the skill which Rossetti had by this time, the autumn of 1859, attained in the painting-art, is a bust fancy-portrait of a woman, with a number of marigolds. The sitter was the one whom Mr. Bell Scott describes in the following terms :—

"The paradoxical conclusion that women and flowers were the only objects worth painting was brought about by the appearance of other ladies besides Miss Siddal coming within his [Rossetti's] orbit. Among these the most important was one who must have had some overpowering attractions for him, although I never could see what they were. He met her in the Strand. She was cracking nuts with her teeth, and throwing the shells about. Seeing Rossetti staring at her, she threw some at him. Delighted with this brilliant *naïveté*, he forthwith accosted her, and carried her off to sit to him for her portrait."

I knew this person extremely well, and shall call her Mrs.

H——, which was the correct initial at, or soon after, the time when my brother first met her. I cannot recollect ever hearing anything about the nuts, but do not contest Mr. Scott's statement on that point. I do contest the allegation that my brother concluded that "women and flowers were the only objects worth painting," and several of his works, executed later than 1859, are there to confute it. That he often did paint beautiful women with floral adjuncts is however quite true. The gentlemen who commissioned or purchased his pictures are chiefly responsible for this result; as he, on the contrary, would in several instances have preferred to carry out as paintings some of his more important designs, including sometimes numerous figures of both sexes. If Mr. Scott "never could see" what were the attractions of Mrs. H——, his eyesight must have differed from that of many other people. She was a pre-eminently fine woman, with regular and sweet features, and a mass of the most lovely blonde hair—light-golden or "harvest yellow." *Bocca Baciata*, which is a most faithful portrait of her, might speak for itself. If Mr. Scott meant not so much to deny that Mrs. H—— was "fair to see," but rather to intimate that she had no charm of breeding, education, or intellect, he was right enough. Another lady of whom my brother saw a great deal in 1859, and for some little while after, was Mrs. Crabb, known as an actress by the name of Miss Herbert. He greatly admired her refined and stately classical face, was pleased with her company, and got her to favour him with sittings in various instances.

In the way of verse, I think *Love's Nocturn* and *The Song of the Bower* belong to 1859—two lyrics of passion, and in the former case of fancy as well, which stand at about the summit of Rossetti's lyrical performance. *The Song of the Bower* I regard as relating to Miss Siddal. Circumstances had kept him more apart from her than had been the case in earlier years, and he gave voice to his feelings in this poem. So at least I regard it.

In 1858 Rossetti and some other artists, along with a few

amateurs or outsiders (myself one of them), promoted the formation of a body called the Hogarth Club—quite a different body from the one which now bears the same name. One object was to hold exhibitions of works by members. These exhibitions, being visited by card of admission, and thus not strictly public, were convenient to such members as did not want to run counter to a rule of the Royal Academy whereby any works previously exhibited in public are excluded from the Academy shows. The first meeting of the Club was in July 1858, at No. 178 Piccadilly; later on the meetings were at No. 6 Waterloo Place, and the Club continued until April 1861. There were two or three exhibitions, to which my brother contributed. He was not much contented with these displays, being of opinion that some of the artists elected into the Club, and sending works of their own, were not partakers in the pictorial aims, nor in harmony with the style, of himself and his leading associates, such as Madox Brown and Burne-Jones. I hardly know now why the Club was dissolved, or allowed to drop. Perhaps its chief promoters found that it did not fully answer their expectations, and that the endeavour to “keep things going” cost them more trouble than it was worth.

## XXII.

### MARRIAGE.

My brother, as I said before, was in love with Miss Siddal as far back as 1850, and soon after that year there had been a definite engagement between them. Nevertheless we have now come up to the year 1860, and they remained as yet unmarried. There were two principal reasons for this delay. First and foremost came her deplorable ill-health, which was often such as to prevent either of them from entertaining the idea of matrimony at a time when other circumstances would have been propitious to it. She looked delicate, and to a skilled eye probably very ill, but had not in the least degree

lost her beauty, nor even her comeliness. Second, his money-position, though by no means so bad or with so little outlook as that of many another young painter, continued for some while precarious; his receipts small, his habits, if not exactly extravagant, unthrifty to the extent of improvidence, his purse often empty, and needing to be replenished by some expedient or other apart from that of the regular day's work. A pawnbroker was a frequent resource—necessarily a very scanty one, and ultimately on the losing side. Besides all this, it may be true that, when a moment came for making the plunge, he hesitated, temporized, and lost it; and this would be only natural for a man immersed in pictorial and partly in literary projects and doings, to whom every hour was precious and bespoken, and who moreover—such was my brother's case—was very difficult to be stirred out of his daily groove of habit and association.

By the beginning of 1860 Rossetti's position, as regards commissions and consequent income, had improved; though it was still far from being so prosperous and secure as it became some years later. The Triptych for Llandaff was going on. The arrangement with Mr. Ruskin had probably come to an end, or was proceeding languidly and intermittently. Mr. Boyce remained an occasional purchaser, and Colonel Gillum, who first came to my brother with an introduction from Browning, and who is now well known as a zealous philanthropist, the founder and director of a "Boys' Home." Mr. Leathart of Newcastle-on-Tyne took several specimens of Rossetti's art; and more particularly Mr. Thomas E. Plint, of Leeds, a stockbroker and prominent Nonconformist leader. He began purchasing towards the end of 1856, and seemed ready to acquire, on terms more than tolerably liberal, almost anything that the painter had to offer him. I do not remember how he first came into this particular artistic circle. He bought from several so-called Præraphaelite painters, and possibly Mr. Holman Hunt, as having exceptional hold on the religious world, may have come foremost. Rossetti, with his constant alertness for his

friends' interests, got Mr. Plint to purchase from Madox Brown, Burne-Jones, and Morris. This professional advantage however was not to continue long, for in the course of 1860 Mr. Plint died very suddenly, leaving Rossetti's affairs with his estate much embroiled, what between payments made and pictures due but not yet brought to completion.

In April 1860, and also in May, my brother was down with Lizzie at Hastings. The reader of these Family-letters will observe one addressed to me on 17 April, showing the very alarming condition of her health at that time, as well as the fact that he had then in his possession an ordinary license for marriage. A letter to Madox Brown, 22 April, is couched in still stronger terms, saying that Lizzie "has seemed ready to die daily, and more than once a day." At last however the moment arrived, and on 23 May they were married at St. Clement's Church, Hastings. It is pleasant to observe, from the note which Rossetti addressed to Brown on this very day, that he had beforehand paid his bride the little attention of getting her initials, E. E. R., stamped in cipher on the notepaper.

They went away at once on a wedding-trip by Folkestone and Boulogne to Paris—a city which had in previous instances seemed favourable to Lizzie's health. At Boulogne Rossetti saw again his good old friends the Maenzas, and his bride viewed them both, but more especially Signor Maenza, with great predilection. Her constitution rallied to some extent, and they stayed in Paris until near the close of June, my brother continuing there to do something in the way of his profession. His ideas on matters of art were now considerably different from what they had been when he visited Paris with Holman Hunt in 1849. He had shed the prejudices—a compound between the juvenile, the half-informed, the wilful, and the humorous—of P.R.B'ism, and no longer scampered through the Louvre until he found some picture of the less fully matured period of art which hit his fancy. In 1860 he pronounced the gorgeous Paul Veronese of *The Marriage in Cana* to be "the greatest picture in the world." This again,

if free from clear perversity, was rash for a pictorial student and practitioner whose "world" of art consisted only of London, Paris, and Belgium, to the exclusion of all those masterpieces of which one knows nothing solid until one has been elsewhere—more especially in Italy. And later on, 1871, he had got to think Veronese (and also Tintoret) "simply detestable without their colour and handling"; but, as the colour and handling *are* in the *Marriage of Cana* picture, he must have retained a very vivid admiration for that.

As I have said, Rossetti did some amount of art-work in Paris. He brought into its present form the pen-and-ink design named *How they met Themselves*, and designed, if he did not partly paint, the subject of *Dr. Johnson and the Methodistical Young Ladies at the Mitre Tavern*. As he was not a little superstitious, and sensitive to ill omens, I am somewhat surprised that he took up the former of these drawings. Here the lady—studied from Lizzie, and very like her—is represented swooning away as she encounters her own wraith—not to speak of her lover or husband, who grasps his sword on seeing the wraith of himself. To meet one's wraith is ominous of death, and to figure Lizzie as meeting her wraith might well have struck her bridegroom as uncanny in a high degree. In less than two years the weird was woefully fulfilled.

From Paris the bride and bridegroom returned to the old quarters in London, 14 Chatham Place—enlarged later on by breaking through the wall of an adjoining house, and adding some apartments on the same floor. With this addition the domicile became compact, comfortable, sightly, and fully sufficient for all present wants. They also took for a while part of a house in Downshire Hill, Hampstead, where they were near the Madox Browns. This was principally or wholly with a view to Lizzie's health.

## XXIII.

*MARRIED LIFE.*

MR. BELL SCOTT has expressed the opinion that Rossetti was not well adapted for married life. He terms marriage "an even way of life the most unlikely possible to suit his late development." By the phrase "his late development" Mr. Scott means apparently that Rossetti, not having indulged in any juvenile amours or entanglements, had in the process of years become more susceptible to influences of that character. On this point I have already had my say, and have made my reader aware that Rossetti was in love with his future wife as far back as his twenty-third year, and had deferred marriage for reasons all of them intelligible, and some cogent. I do not, however, dissent from Mr. Scott's opinion that my brother, at the age of thirty-two, was less likely to settle down into the ordinary habits of married life than many other men would have been.

His poetical and artistic temperament, his devotion to the ideas and practice of an artist and poet, his now rooted bachelor-customs of working when he could or when he liked, of keeping any hours or no recognized hours, of living in chambers without a regular home-dinner, of seeing any people he chose just as they happened to come, most of them men, of eschewing the minor observances of society in the way of visiting and dressing, etc.—and in short his propensity for doing whatever he liked simply because he liked it, and without any self-accommodation to what other people might like instead—all this made it improbable that he would prove a complaisant or well-matching husband on the ordinary lines of complaisance. He was not what I should call "Bohemian"—he neither drank nor gambled nor betted nor smoked nor amused himself in any rough-and-ready manner; but certainly he did not belong to the tribe of those decorous citizens whose highest ambition seems to be that they should demean themselves the one like the other, and all in some conformity to



the upper classes." Besides, he had long been inured to having things his own way, and to a certain ungrudgingly conceded leadership even among the men of genius who formed his inner circle. He might have modified Iago's phrase, and said, "For I am nothing if not dominant." It is to be remembered that his wife was perfectly accustomed to his habits, had much of tendency and feeling in the same direction as himself, and, from her constant and severe ill-health if from no other cause, was very little in the way of polite visiting or elegant sight-seeing.

Two families she did very frequently visit with—the Madox Browns and the Morrisses; and I suppose in a minor degree the Burne-Joneses, for Mr. Jones had married (Miss Georgina MacDonald) very soon after my brother's wedding. The MacDonalds were a rather numerous family, all or most of whom were in some degree known to my brother, and were probably not unknown to his wife. Two of the sisters are now Mrs. Poynter, wife of the Director of the National Gallery, and Mrs. Kipling, mother of Mr. Rudyard Kipling. With the Brown and Morris families Mrs. Rossetti stayed every now and then along with her husband, and at some other times without him. The Ruskins they saw occasionally, but not so regularly as might have been expected. For one reason or another I happen to have witnessed very little of my brother's married life. We lived at opposite ends of the town—he by Blackfriars Bridge, and I, with my mother and sisters, near Regent's Park (166 Albany Street), and each of us had his separate unavoidable occupations.

There is a pretty little letter from Mr. Ruskin, congratulating Dante and Lizzie on their marriage. It is dated 4 September 1860, as he had been away at a prior date. I extract the postscript:—

"I looked over all the book of sketches at Chatham Place yesterday [the book of sketches was a large handsome volume given to Rossetti by Lady Dalrymple, a most obliging friend of his, sister Mrs. Prinsep. He inserted into its commodious leaves a great  
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number of pencil and other drawings, many of which remained undisposed-of up to the date of his death. Mr. Ruskin, it is to be inferred, had called in Chatham Place on some day when the Rossettis were staying at their lodgings at Hampstead]. I think Ida should be very happy to see how much more beautifully, perfectly, and tenderly, you draw when you are drawing *her* than when you draw anybody else. She cures you of all your worst faults when you only look at her."

These drawings of Lizzie, very considerable in number from first to last, were made some before and some after marriage. There is a substantial measure of truth in what Mr. Ruskin said as to their quality, pure and exquisite in a high degree, as pitted against even the finest drawings which my brother made from other sitters at any period of his pictorial career.

After allowing for the three married couples whom I have named, there was not, I think, any person whom Rossetti saw, during his wedded life, so constantly and so delightedly as Mr. Swinburne. This poet's first volume—the two dramas of *The Queen Mother* and *Rosamund*—came out in the only completed year, 1861, of my brother's marriage. It did not create any particular stir, but Rossetti knew perfectly well what to think of the volume, and of its author and his future. Mr. Swinburne's brilliant intellect, his wide knowledge of poetry and astonishing memory in quotation, his enthusiasm for whatsoever he recognized as great, his fascinating audacity and pungency in talk, and the singular and ingenuous charm of his manner to any one whom he either liked or respected, made him the most welcome of comrades to Rossetti. For what this archimage of verse thought of Mrs. Rossetti I may refer back to a previous section, XVII. At this time my brother came also into habits of some intimacy with Mr. George Meredith the celebrated novelist, and with Mr. Frederick A. Sandys the painter—of whom Rossetti had heard something in 1857, when Mr. Sandys published a caricature of Millais's picture *Sir Isumbras at the Ford*, containing figures of Millais himself, along with Hunt and Rossetti, but intended chiefly as a pasquinade against Ruskin.

another person who was often in Rossetti's apartments was Mr. James Anderson Rose, a solicitor and art-collector, who continued on easy and pleasant terms with my brother for several years, though the latter eventually (whatever the cause) preferred to lose sight of him. Yet another was Mr. Alexander Gilchrist, author of *The Life of Etty*, who was at his time engaged in writing his most praiseworthy *Life of Blake*. For Gilchrist the feeling of Rossetti, who first met him in the spring of 1861 in relation to the Blake work, was one of genuine friendliness. He liked the writer and his writings, and had a high regard for his insight as a critic of art. Few of the events occurring at any time of his life seem to have affected Rossetti as a more staggering blow than the sudden death of Gilchrist from scarlet fever,<sup>1</sup> at the age of only thirty-three, on 30 November 1861. While his short and fierce illness lasted, Rossetti wrote to Mrs. Gilchrist offering that either himself or I would keep up the invalid's current literary work; and he made another nearly similar offer immediately after Gilchrist's death. But soon a far sadder blow was to strike him.

Let me repeat here, from *The Life of Anne Gilchrist*—herself a noble-natured woman, whom my brother knew and appreciated from 1861 until his life closed in 1882—a trait which does honour to a lady occasionally mentioned in my pages, the second Mrs. Madox Brown. It should be understood that scarlet fever was then raging in the Gilchrist household—not only Gilchrist himself, who succumbed, but so too of his children, who recovered, being dangerously attacked:—

"In the tragedies of life there seem to be among our fellow-ings always one or two with a dash of heroism in their natures. Mrs. Madox Brown offered to come and help. Anne Gilchrist, even then, remembered that Mrs. Brown possessed children—a thought which made her decline the noble offer."

Several letters from Rossetti, on this subject and others, are in the book *Anne Gilchrist*, Edited by Herbert H. Gilchrist. Unwin, 1887.

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Married life cannot be exactly happy when one of the spouses is perpetually and grievously ill. Affectionate and tender it may be, but not happy ; indeed the very affection bars the possibility of happiness. I hardly think that at any time in her brief period of marriage was Lizzie Rossetti quite so alarmingly ill as she had been just before it commenced ; but health was irrecoverably gone, and sickness, more or less serious, was her constant portion. She was compelled—no doubt under medical advice—to take laudanum or some opiate continually, and stimulants alternated with opiates. On 2 May 1861 she was confined of a stillborn female infant—Dr. Babington, the Head Physician of the Lying-in Hospital, being called in, as well as another doctor. Immediately before this occurrence Rossetti had written, "She has too much courage to be in the least downcast herself" ; and she rallied from the confinement rapidly enough.

In the summer of 1861 another of Rossetti's friends had passed away—Mrs. Wells, the sister of Mr. Boyce, and wife of the R.A. Portrait-painter. Her age may have been under thirty. She was herself an exhibiting painter of exceptional talent, from which my brother and many more hoped much. He took a portrait of her as she lay in death ; and Gilchrist, so soon to follow her to the grave, wrote an obituary-notice of her, highly and deservedly eulogistic.

A phrase in one of my brother's letters to Madox Brown, 2 December 1861, may be worth observing : he professes to be "getting awfully fat and torpid." In early youth he was slim and rather attenuated. This had now for some while ceased to be the case ; and the phrase which he used, though exaggerated, was not repugnant to fact. After this date he was sometimes (as for instance in 1873) still fatter than then, but with marked variations from time to time. In his closing years he might be considered thin again.

## XXIV.

## WORK IN 1860-61—"THE EARLY ITALIAN POETS"—THE MORRIS FIRM.

AT no period of his life was my brother more busily employed than during his brief term of marriage, May 1860 to February 1862. He was much engaged in painting, in a literary project, and in a general scheme of art-work.

The death in 1860 of the then principal purchaser of his paintings, Mr. Plint, has been previously mentioned. This, at the very outset of married life, was a most serious misfortune and embarrassment to him—and a sorrow as well, for he entertained a cordial liking for this liberal and estimable man. Mr. Plint had paid him in advance no less a sum than £714, for three pictures not yet completed, perhaps hardly begun; and Rossetti had to execute and send in the works without so far neglecting other employment as to wrong surviving buyers, or to deprive himself and his wife of the means of subsistence from month to month. The details appear to some extent in his Family-letters. Some pictures probably were completed without any great delay, and my brother repaid also a part of the purchase-money. In 1865 the whole of Mr. Plint's collection of art was sold off. It included five works by Rossetti: the small oil-picture named *Burd Alane*, and the water-colours of *The Lovers* (called also *Carlisle Tower*), *The Bower-garden*, *The Wedding of St. George*, and *Dr. Johnson with the Methodistical Young Ladies at the Mitre Tavern*. Another small oil-picture of his had belonged to Mr. Plint—*The Queen of Hearts* (or *Regina Cordium*), being a portrait of Lizzie Rossetti; but this, as the sale was determined upon very soon after Lizzie's death, was, out of consideration for the painter's feelings, withdrawn from the auction under some arrangement. There were also paintings by Turner, Etty, Burne-Jones, Madox Brown, Millais, Holman Hunt, Hughes, Wallis, Windus, Brett, Alfred Hunt, William Hunt, Lewis, Holland, Oakes, Hook, Edouard Frère, Leys, and various others. This seems a sufficiently tempting list; but for some

reason or other (possibly, but I cannot affirm it, there was a combination of picture-dealers inimical to the new school) the sale proved a very great failure—so far, at any rate, as pictures of the “Præraphælite” order were concerned. Scarcely any even tolerable prices were realized save by Rossetti’s pictures, and for these the prices were much less than Mr. Plint had not extravagantly given. For years afterwards, or indeed for the remainder of his life, my brother mistrusted the chances of auction-sales, and did his best to shut out from them any works of his own.

Among the productions of Rossetti in these two years were—the water-colour of *Lucrezia Borgia* (preparing a poison-draught); the finished oil-sketch of the old *Magdalene* subject; the crowded pen-and-ink design of *Cassandra* (prophesying the death of Hector); *The Annunciation*, painted in oil on a pulpit in the Church of St. Martin-on-the-Hill, Scarborough; a water-colour head of Mr. Swinburne, I suppose the most vigorous and finished record of his youth which posterity will have to cherish; a red-chalk life-sized head of Ruskin; the oil-picture *Fair Rosamund*; and an oil-picture named *Dantis Amor*, of symbolical character. The same design appears in a pen-and-ink drawing. There were also the two designs for Christina Rossetti’s volume (published in 1862) *Goblin Market, and other Poems*. The *Magdalene* stands very fully described in a letter which my brother in 1865 addressed to the wife of the purchaser, Mr. Clabburn of Norwich. This is printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 16 January 1891. The *Cassandra* is one of the most important among all my brother’s inventions. Many a time did he wish to set-to at painting it, but something always interfered—chiefly the constant run of commissions for pictures of a less exacting and less costly kind. It was certainly one of his lifelong regrets that this subject remained only a design, and not a picture.

The time had now come for Rossetti to appear before the public as author of a volume—*The Early Italian Poets*. I have already spoken at some length about this very interesting series of translations, the work almost entirely of his



eighteenth to his twenty-second year ; and I will avow my belief that there was not in the United Kingdom another man who could have done them half as well—with half the insight into the poetic motives and character of the originals, or half the personal power of poetic transfusion, which he brought to the task. Self-reliant though he was when he made the translations, and still more so when he was preparing to publish them, and, by his innermost nature, immutably biassed in certain directions and not in others, he was nevertheless extremely ready to consult well-qualified friends as to this book, and to take some practical advantage of the advice which they might offer him. In this way he showed his MS. to Mr. Allingham, Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Patmore, Count Aurelio Saffi (then in Oxford, once the noble Triumvir of Rome along with Mazzini and Armellini), and no doubt to Mr. Swinburne and some others as well. To myself he committed the MS. of the *Vita Nuova*, asking me to introduce any change of diction, etc., which I might judge expedient.

Ruskin liked the translations, but urged that crudities (and there must have been many in MSS. going back to that remote period of youth) should be removed. Patmore wrote a letter of so much generous *blau*, and so stringently expressed, that I will not scruple to re-produce it here :—

" 21 May 1861.

" MY DEAR ROSSETTI,

" A thousand thanks for what I see at a glance is one of the very few really precious books in the English or any other language. It seems to me to be the first time that a translator has proved himself, by his translations alone, to be a *great* poet. Your book is so exquisitely to my taste that I almost dread to read it—as one dreads other great enjoyments which will diminish with enjoyment. How I envy the iron muscle and the electric nerve which appears everywhere in your poetic diction ! It would be absurd to *wish* you success after such intrinsic success as the book itself is.

" Yours ever,

" COVENTRY PATMORE.

" I am rejoiced to hear of your wife's health."

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Mr. Ruskin's good-will to *The Early Italian Poets* was not confined to words. After another publisher had been consulted without definite upshot, the MS. was offered to Ruskin's publishers Messrs. Smith and Elder, and they agreed to undertake the risk, subject (it would seem) to an advance or guarantee of £100 by Ruskin. The book came out in 1861, and was extremely well received. I might even say it was received with general acclaim, so far as a work of poetical translation ever *can* be welcomed and applauded in England. By 1869 about 600 copies of it had sold; and the profits covered the £100 of Mr. Ruskin, and a minute dole of less than £9 to Rossetti. A few copies, 64, still remained on hand. It has been stated that Mr. Ruskin subsidized Rossetti in bringing out not only *The Early Italian Poets*, but also the volume of original *Poems*, 1870. But this is quite erroneous.

My brother had intended to produce some etchings to illustrate the volume. He made a graceful design of two lovers kissing,<sup>1</sup> which was engraved, and formed the foundation of his water-colour entitled *The Rose-garden*. Even as late as 18 June 1861 he thought of doing the etchings, and giving them in gratis if the publishers would not compensate him. At last this project was abandoned, and the book appeared without any designs.

At some time—it may have been before 1861—Rossetti showed a number of his original poems to Ruskin, with a direct view to the publication of some of them in the *Cornhill Magazine*, issued by Messrs. Smith and Elder, and then edited by Thackeray (the latter must have been known to my brother by sight, but I question whether they ever interchanged a word). Ruskin admired the poems to a large extent, but raised objections to one and another, and no magazine-publishing ensued. Rossetti however was still bent

<sup>1</sup> To my surprise, I lately saw, in an American journal, this design, modernized in costume, adopted to bedeck the advertisement of some tradesman for his "washing-powder"—a queer phase of metempsychosis.

upon bringing the poems out ; and the volume of *The Early Italian Poets* contained an intimation that *Dante at Verona, and other Poems*, would shortly be printed. This also, as will soon be seen, came to nothing.

It was, I believe, in 1860 that an enterprise which has proved to be of no less than national importance was set on foot. I mean the foundation of the Decorative Firm which, known at first as "Morris, Marshall, Falkner, and Co.," is now named "Morris and Company." One may note it as rather curious that this Firm consisted of the same number of men, seven, as the Præraphaelite Brotherhood. The Brotherhood introduced into painting something that might well be called a revolution, and the Firm introduced into decoration something still more revolutionary for widespread and as yet permanent effect. Rossetti was prominent in both adventures.

The seven members of the Firm—I will name them in what appears to me to be the approximate order of their importance in bringing this scheme into working-order—were William Morris, Madox Brown, Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Philip Webb, Peter Paul Marshall, and Charles Falkner. Mr. Webb is an architect of much originality of view, and practical attainment and skill. He built, among other things, the Red House at Upton tenanted by Mr. Morris. He has also marked ability in designing for stained glass and other forms of decoration, especially in the way of animal life. Mr. Marshall was the first originator of the idea of such a Firm. He is an engineer (now for many years settled in Norwich), son-in-law to Mr. John Miller, the merchant and picture-collector in Liverpool, and is besides a capable painter who might, under differing circumstances, have passed out of the amateur into the professional stage of work. I believe Rossetti was the first person to whom he broached his idea ; he eagerly caught at it, and imparted it to others. Mr. Falkner, an Oxford Mathematician and close friend of Mr. Morris, took no part in the practical work of the Firm, but gave it his willing support ; and I suppose that he, like each of the others, put a modicum of money into it. What this

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modicum was—in my brother's or in any case—I do not know. As to Rossetti, at any rate, I presume it to have been decidedly small. Mr. Morris was on a different footing in this respect. He ventured something very substantial, and, but for him, it may be safely said that the Firm would not have been constituted at all. They set up in the secluded but decorous quarters of Queen Square, Bloomsbury; or I think, first of all, in Red Lion Square.

They were all young men—the senior, Madox Brown, being aged thirty-nine in 1860; and there was a deal of jollity among them. Indeed there was always jollity where Rossetti was present—not to speak of Morris and Brown, who were the heartiest of the hearty, or of any of the other members; for nothing is more contrary to fact, or more absurd to the reminiscence of those who knew him in the old days, than the current notion that Rossetti was a vague and gloomy phantast, combined of mysticism and self-opinion, who was always sunk in despondency, or fizzing with affectation, or airing some intangible ideal. I must apologize to his loved memory for even alluding to such a trumpery misconception. Winged was the jest and loud and contagious the laugh from his full lips. Had there been no one else to keep his colleagues in heart and humour, his own resources would have sufficed. To some of these highly distinguished colleagues it would be unjust to say that Rossetti was *primus inter pares*; but certainly he was *nulli secundus*. Nature had endowed him in ample measure with one of her most precious secrets—that of dominance, leadership, and comradeship, each in its proper place. No more downright and no more unpretentious man existed within the four seas. How long his vigorous temperament continued to scintillate into high spirits we shall see as we proceed. There were flashes of it till the last.

The more one reflects upon it, the more surprising it seems that three youths, almost boys, started, in great lightness of heart and disregard of externals, if also with a most resolute purpose at the core, so serious a movement as that of

Præraphælitism; and that, with some assistance from the same quarter, other youths—I mean more especially Morris and Jones—founded, in very much the same temper of mind, so vast a recasting and reform of decorative art as is identified with the name and the fortunes of “Morris, Marshall, Falkner, and Co.” Clearly, without reality of genius, of insight, and of labour, neither of these enterprises would have made the least headway. A puff of wind, a treacherous sand-bank, a sunken reef, or a rock-bound coast—and more than enough of all these were at hand—would have made short work of the whole craft.

Light or boisterous chaff among themselves, and something very like dictatorial irony towards customers, were the methods by which this singular commercial firm was conducted, and was turned, after a longish period of uncertain probation, into a flourishing success. There was no compromise. Mr. Morris, as the managing partner, laid down the law, and all his clients had to bend or break. Frequent meetings—of the least business-like aspect of business, and yet thoroughly efficient, as the event proved—were held; and the only designation for the undertaking which passed current with the partners or their intimates was “the Shop.” From the first the Firm turned out whatever any one wanted in the way of decorative material—architectural adjuncts, furniture, tapestries, embroiderys, stained glass, wall-papers, and what not. The goods were first-rate, the art and the workmanship excellent, the prices high. No concession was made to individual tastes or want of taste, no question of abatement was entertained. You could have the things such as the Firm chose that they should be, or you could do without them.

A detailed history of the Firm of Morris, Marshall, Falkner, and Co., or Morris and Company, would by this time be an interesting thing; but it is not my affair to write one, nor indeed have I any means of doing so, even if the inclination served. I must limit myself to a few particulars regarding my brother's work in this connexion. As I have before implied, he was not the leading spirit in the Firm.

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Mr. Morris came much the foremost, not only constantly on the spot, to work, direct, and transact, by his abnormal and varied aptitude at all kinds of processes. Mr. Madox Brown had always taken a common interest in decorative art as applied to the requirements ; and his activity, as well as that of Mr. Jones, in designing for stained glass and other work, far exceeded any that Rossetti was called upon to do. Mr. Webb must likewise have done a solid amount of work. Towards the beginning of 1865 an acquaintance with a brother, Mr. Warrington Taylor, was brought into the business as a manager and accountant. He did excellent work in keeping things straight and safe ; but this was not for a few years, as he died young of consumption. Rossetti's good perceptions in various matters of art, especially in

My brother was entitled to a certain proportion of the profits of the partnership, and besides he was paid a regulated rate for such designs as he produced. There were exceptions, these were for stained glass. For example, at Scarborough, he designed two lights—*Adam and Eve in Paradise*. There were also seven glass-caskets for the *Parable of the Vineyard* (very able compositions, all of dramatic character) ; six of *St. George and the Dragon* and *The Last Judgment*, nine subjects within a year. At a later date, 1869, he drew *The Sermon on the Mount* for a window in Christ Church, Albany Street, in Manchester, for Aunt Margaret Polidori. These are the only designs done by the Morris firm (besides the pulpit-painting, previous to 1865, of *The Annunciation*) which appear to be known. These were the only designs which were sold.



#### DEATH OF MRS. DANTE ROSSETTI.

apprehend, phthisis, with the accompaniment of a great deal of acute and wearing neuralgia. It was for the neuralgia she had been medically authorized or directed to take frequent doses of laudanum. The phthisis had not as yet brought on any noticeable degree of emaciation; but it was running its course, and he would have been a sanguine person at the beginning of 1862, could anticipate for her more than some five or six years of life at the utmost. Though she was often kept within-doors by illness, her habits were not those of a recluse, and she frequently accompanied her husband to dinner at some public dining-room or other. She had a little of a housewifely turn. She often sat to him—although this, only a few days before her last, for the figure of the Princess Sabra in the water-colour which is called *St. George and the Princess Sabra*, or *St. George and the Dragon*. She is shown holding the knight's helmet, filled with water to lave the bloodstains of his recent conflict. This was the latest occasion on which Lizzie sat for any

On 10 February 1862 Rossetti and his wife, with Swinburne, dined at the Sablonière Hotel in Leicester Square. She was not less well than usual, and joined in the talk and animation. She returned with her husband to their rooms in Chatham Place. He went out again, and was back late. I will quote here the few words which I jotted down the following day, as a memento for my own use. It is the scantiest, but must serve for our present purpose:—

"February 11. Death of poor Lizzie, Gabriel's wife. She died last night past 11 from the Working Men's College. I found her almost gone from the effects of laudanum; and

been there during the entire duration of my brother's stay, to whom Gabriel had called on before 5 in the morning [his residence was then near Highgate Rise], and the circumstances. Lizzie and Gabriel had dined at a friend's in Swinburne that afternoon. The poor thing looks worn now and beautiful.

" 'Ed avea in sè umiltà sì verace  
Che pareva che dicesse, Io sono in pace.' "

I could not but think of that all the time I looked at the portrait, exactly like."

The only further particulars I find in any book of Mrs. Rossetti's death are given by Mr. Bell Scott, who apparently have heard them from the widower. He says that Rossetti, after taking her back to Chichester, "advised her to go to bed"; and "on his next home-coming he had to grope about for a light, and she died, without receiving a reply."

Of course there was an inquest, of which I shall give the only newspaper account which I possess, which comes from the *Daily News*, but I am not sure I think that any other newspaper account, in the least detailed, appeared—a fact which sufficiently shows the great bulk of the British public the name of Dante Rossetti continued practically unknown at the time of his death in 1862. I was present at the inquest, but omitted to make any record of it. My brother braced himself

<sup>1</sup> This couplet comes from Dante's *Vita Nuova*, the poem

the painful effort of giving evidence ; and his deposition was followed (though not so shown in the newspaper) by those of Mr. Swinburne, and of Mrs. Birrell who testified to uniform affectionate relations between the husband and wife.

The following is the newspaper-paragraph :—

“DEATH OF A LADY FROM AN OVERDOSE OF LAUDANUM.—On Thursday Mr. Payne held an inquest at Bridewell Hospital on the body of Eliza Eleanor Rosetti, aged twenty-nine, wife of Dante Gabriel Rosetti, Artist, of No. 14 Chatham Place, Blackfriars, who came to her death under very melancholy circumstances. Mr. Rosetti stated that on Monday afternoon, between six and seven o'clock, he and his wife went out in the carriage for the purpose of dining with a friend at the Sablonnière Hotel, Leicester Square [the term ‘the carriage’ seems to suggest that my brother kept a carriage of his own, which was most assuredly not the fact]. When they had got about halfway there his wife appeared to be very drowsy, and he wished her to return. She objected to their doing so, and they proceeded to the Hotel, and dined there. They returned home at eight o'clock, when she appeared somewhat excited. He left home again at nine o'clock, his wife being then about to go to bed. On his return at half-past eleven o'clock he found his wife in bed, snoring loudly and utterly unconscious. She was in the habit of taking laudanum, and he had known her take as much as 100 drops at a time, and he thought she had been taking it before they went out. He found a phial on a table at the bedside, which had contained laudanum, but it was then empty. A doctor was sent for, and promptly attended. She had expressed no wish to die, but quite the reverse. Indeed she contemplated going out of town in a day or two, and had ordered a new mantle which she intended wearing on the occasion. He believed she took the laudanum for the purpose of inducing sleep, and that she had taken it in excess.

medical gentlemen stayed with her all night, and she minutes past seven o'clock on Tuesday morning.—The verdict of Accidental Death."

Our mother and sisters and myself were with Dante during those harrowing days which intervened between a death and a funeral. His anguish was keen, and clear. He was not prostrated in that kind of way which makes a man incapable of self-regulation. Brother was there, and the sister of Lizzie playfully nicknamed him "Roman." I recollect a moment of great agitation in my brother, standing by the corpse, was crying out, "Lizzie, come back to me!" With a woman's kindness, my sister felt that this was an instant when emotion was seconded, and not controlled; and she reminded him of old touches of sportive and now pathetic affection, and the freer flow to his tears. Mr. Ruskin called, but saw the rest of us, but not Dante. He spoke of the tenderness of feeling, and I then for the first time became aware of the great change which had taken place in my religion. On the second or third day after the funeral she looked still lovelier than before, and Dante asked me to believe that she was really dead—it might have been a trance consequent upon the laudanum. He said that Mr. Marshall should be called in to decide—without which I need not say.

The day of the funeral came. On this also I have a brief note:—

"February 17. The funeral. Grave 5779, Highgate."

## DEATH OF MRS. DANTE ROSSETTI.

and informed Madox Brown of what he had done, saying, "I have often been writing at those poems when Lizzy was ill and suffering, and I might have been attending to her and now they shall go." Brown disapproved of this sacrifice to a mere impulse of grief or of self-reproach, and he appealed to me to remonstrate. I replied—"We must let feeling do him honour, and let him do as he likes." The sacrifice was no doubt a grave one. Rossetti thus not only renounced any early or definite hopes of poetic fame, but had always been a ruling passion with him, but he had abandoned a project already distinctly formulated and justified; for, as we have seen, a forthcoming volume of original poems was advertised in *The Early Italian*.

Mr. Caine relates this matter somewhat differently. I do not know from whom he obtained his details; whether they may be considered incompatible with my reminiscences, I abide by my own. He says:—

"The poems he had written, so far as they were poems, were chiefly inspired by and addressed to her. At her request he had copied them into a little book presented to him for the purpose, and on the day of the funeral he walked into the room where her body lay, and, unmindful of the presence of friends, he spoke to his dead wife as though she heard, saying, as he held the book, 'These words it contained were written to her and for her, and she must take them with her, for they could not remain when she has gone.' Then he put the volume into the coffin between her chest and her beautiful hair, and it was that day buried with her in the Westwood Cemetery."

Probably very few letters from Rossetti are extant immediately after and relating to his wife's death. We

"45 UPPER ALBANY STREET,<sup>1</sup>

"MY DEAR MRS. GILCHRIST,—

"I thank you sincerely in my turn for the warmth and sympathy which, coming from you, seem more to me than any I have received. I remember clearly the mistrust and insufficiency with which I sat down to write to you some time ago, and know now what it is both to write and to receive the sincerest words at such a time.

"I have now to be thankful for obligations connected with my work which were a source of anxiety before; for what I can now do seems to me that I could never work again. But I am now to find the inactive moments the most unbearable, and I feel the power, as I feel most surely the necessity, of working without delay. Of my dear wife I do not dare to speculate, I attempt any vain conjecture whether it may ever be possible for me, or I be found worthy, to meet her again.

"I am staying at my mother's just now, and hope that some of my family, if not all, may join with me in seeking a new home, as in any case I cannot any longer bear to remain in my present quarters. I have thoughts of coming if possible to Chelsea,<sup>2</sup> and in the impossibility I find of remaining inactive, be it where, in fresh quarters in that and other directions. Your friend Alexander Gilchrist] I still have, and hope to send you some news from it, if I find such possible [he was thinking of a portrait in the likeness of Gilchrist, founded partly on the photograph of him, but he did not succeed]. Whenever it may be necessary to write about the *Life of Blake* I hope you will let me know. My brother is equally anxious with myself, and perhaps

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SETTLING IN CHEYNE WALK.

XXVI.

*SETTLING IN CHEYNE WALK.*

THE letter just cited has shown two points: that after his bereavement, did not feel equal to continue to reside at Chatham Place—I hardly believe that he spent even a single night after his wife's funeral—and that, upon settling in some new house, of obtaining the companionship of some or all of the members of his family. These were our mother, our two sisters, myself, and a rather aged aunt, Margaret Polidori, now considered as invalided, and living a very secluded life in room 166 Albany Street. My brother also particularly desired to have Mr. Swinburne in the same house with him, thinking, not unreasonably, that, in his own depressed state of mind, he needed some inspiring association which he could scarcely obtain from mere family-life, and that he could procure this better from Mr. Swinburne than from any other available person. The Chambers in Chatham Place, after Rossetti's departure, tenanted by Mr. Boscawen, remained there until 1868, shortly preceding the final destruction of the building.

The various members of the family did in fact entertain the proposal raised by Dante; the only serious difficulty was in relation to our sister Maria, who went out giving lessons in Italian etc., and for whom any such locality as

house with and look after Dante, if that was his wish, and glad also, when the wish was fulfilled, where they were.

At first Dante stayed with us in the Cheyne Walk and he was also at times with Madox. I remember Mr. William Sharp that the earliest portrait of Dante after his wife's death was done at the Cheyne Walk, a small but richly toned water-colour, known as "*a Lattice*," portrayed from a person standing at a lattice. I think, however, that a crayon head of Dante bears the date February 1862, may have been painted at *Girl at a Lattice*. It remains in my possession constantly to hang in my brother's little bedroom at the Cheyne Walk. Next, pending a definite settlement, I took Chambers, by himself, on the first day of the Cheyne Walk's Inn Fields. The first distraction being past, he found himself capable of doing more than like other men, and the Chambers proved to be for his requirements; so much so indeed that he was to leave them and take up his engagements elsewhere. He almost regretted that he had assumed a responsibility so novel, a responsibility, with all its drawbacks (as he was always highly disinclined) of responsibility. The die was cast, however, and nothing was to be done but to wait its chances as they came.

For the Cheyne Walk house a new arrangement had been determined. Rossetti was to be a tenant of the Cheyne Walk (rent assuredly a very moderate one) —if I remember right—a premium of £100 per annum. As his sub-tenants for defined portions of the Cheyne Walk were to be three persons—Mr. Swinburne, Mr. John Addington Symonds, and myself. Of course each of them was to have something to do with Dante; though the latter, in fact, did not allow me to con-



## SETTLING IN CHEYNE WALK.

constantly. I came on three fixed days of the week not on any others unless some particular occasion. Swinburne, and I think Meredith, had their respective separate sitting-rooms, in which they received their personal visitors. I had, and required, a bedroom only. Dante Rossetti was by this time familiar with Mr. Meredith, whom he had known increasingly for some three years past, and whose talents for work he seriously, though not uncritically, admired ; far more yet by no means so much so as with Mr. Swinburne.

Tudor House got not slightly altered in external appearance—not perhaps in structural essentials—soon after my brother's death. When he entered it, neither Cheyne Walk nor any part of London had a Thames Embankment. In front of the house there were all the boating bustle and longshore litter of the old days : there was also no Cannon Bridge, and across the river no Battersea Park. Cremorne Gardens, at a moderate distance to the West, were still regarded as a place of demi-reputable entertainment—dancing, fireworks, and assignations, with all their accompaniments and sequels. The look of things was far more picturesque than now—less of decorum and of stateliness, more of life and movement. The house itself was a fine old solid one without anything peculiar or showy in external aspect. It was old-fashioned, many-roomed, homelike, and comfortable with any number of wall-cupboards, and needing nothing beyond good furniture and proper keeping-up to be a really enjoyable residence. Furniture was supplied by my brother—even from the first, but more especially as years went on with profuse abundance and distinguished gusto for w

Mr. Hall Caine has given several particulars of the residence and its garden, and I shall take up some of them. He has had experience in the matter, and knows what he is talking about in regard to it. It will be understood that he never saw the house in 1880; and many of his details indicate a state of decay and gloom which did not exist in 1862, and in 1865 and for a few years onwards, when he had accumulated large quantities of handsome furniture, blue china, and other articles of great *virtù*. A great store of such things remained in the house in July 1882, when, consequent upon his death, they went to the hammer. But even these were but a small portion of what he had introduced and accumulated in time. Much had been already sold, much more otherwise dispersed. Mr. Caine says, and I repeat the remark here and there:—

“It was called Tudor House when he began to build, and the tradition that Elizabeth Tudor had lived there, which I always heard as current was that the house, as a nursery for the children of Henry VIII. and his all, can only apply to some previous house on the site. The existing structure must belong to the Georgian period [not to that of Queen Anne]: and it is understood that Thackeray describes in *Esmond* as the home of Chelsey. A large garden, which recently was used for building purposes, lay at the back, . . . dotted with trees and enclosed by a high wall [the garden, at least, was an acre in extent, was partly, but not wholly, cut

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alone, and commanded as grounds a large part of the space occupied by the adjoining residences. . . . Rossetti's house had the appearance of a plain Queen Anne's erection, much mutilated by the introduction of unsightly bay-windows [I cannot but think this rather hard on the bay-windows—to me, and to my brother, also, always a pleasant feature of a house to live in]; the bricks seemed to be falling into decay; . . . the angles of the steps, the untrodden flags of the courtyard, to be here and there overgrown with moss and weeds. . . . The hall had a puzzling look of elegance and nobility and shabbiness. . . . Three doors led out of the hall, one on each side and one in front, and two corridors opened into the hall, but there was no sign of staircase, nor had it any light except what was borrowed from the fan-light that looked into the porch. The door to the right led into the small dining-room; that to the left into the sitting-room first used by Mr. Swinburne, and ultimately by Mr. Caine himself; the one in front, into the studio, which an ordinary tenant, would have been the dining-room]. . . . The changes which the building must have undergone since the period of its erection had so filled it with crooks and corners as to bewilder the most ingenious observer to account for its peculiarities. . . . The studio was a large room, probably measuring thirty feet by twenty, and structurally as puzzling as the other parts of the house. A series of columns and arches on one side suggested that the building had almost certainly been at some period the site of an important staircase with a wide well; and on the other side a broad mullioned window, reaching to the ceiling, seemed certainly to bear witness to the occupant's own contribution to the peculiarities of the edifice [this window had been enlarged, but not constructed, at Rossetti's instance some while after he entered the house]. . . . [Another window at the side, which was heavily darkened by the thick foliage of the trees that grew in the garden beyond. . . . [Rossetti's study-room, which was on the first floor] was entered from another

the bed, and thick velvet curtains before the window. Above the bed, an enormous black-oak chimney-piece of curious design, of his own design, and constructed out of decorated slabs of stone, here and there by himself], having an ivory crucifix on the top of its ledges, covered a part of one side, and reached to the ceiling. When I reached the room that I was to occupy [it is on a landing between the ground-floor and first floor], it, like Rossetti's bedroom, heavy with hangings, antique picture-panels, with a ceiling (unlike that of the other rooms in the house) out of all reach or sight; and so dark, that the candle seemed only to glimmer in it. A narrow avenue of lime-trees opened into a grass-plot of no great extent [it is the grass-plot which, allowing for a small part, was afterwards built over; the avenue continues to the back of the house]. The trees were just as Nature made them, the grass, which in places was lying long, dry, and yellowed by the sun—weeds creeping up in damp places, and the pathway scattered upon the verges."

A few words should still be added to Mr. Caine's descriptive description of the house. On the basement floor were two spacious kitchen-rooms, and an oddly complicated system of vaults, which perhaps had at one time led to the river-side. The two ground-floor sitting-rooms opened out to the front and the river; the studio had a small opening on the hinder part of the corridor, and a door, down a few steps, into the garden-avenue. The staircase, apparent to Mr. Caine from the front hall, the front staircase, to the right and to the left of the

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premises. Mr. Caine makes no mention of the chief feature of the house—the unusually long and slightly drawing-room on the first floor, running the whole length of the large frontage, and presenting from its three spacious bay-windows a most enjoyable view of the river, and of the big old trees which yield umbrage to Cheyne Walk. On the second floor were a large number of rooms used as bed-chambers, hardly less than a dozen, and some of them very pleasant and commodious. There may also, but my recollection is not clear as to this, have been two or three lofts under the roof. The roof was a great deal of lead; and, at one time during my brother's occupancy, some thieves attempted to make free with it. Mr. Herbert Gilchrist produced a very good drawing of the studio before the sale had finished in 1862. Mr. G. T. Robinson favoured me with a water-colour of the drawing-room; and three rooms were portrayed by Henry Treffry Dunn (of whom more anon), and photographs were taken from his designs.

It was on 24 October 1862 that Rossetti first took possession of Tudor House. His three sub-tenants were there on the same day, or immediately afterwards. On 3 November he wrote to Madox Brown, "I have reclaimed my studio from the general wilderness, and got to work."

Some writers have supposed that Rossetti was constantly mournful and dejected after his wife's death. If it were so, I would be the first to confirm the statement, and to set forward reasons partially if not wholly justifying him for such a tribute to sentiment, and such a revolt against the inevitable will of Fate. But the fact was not so, and, as a faithful biographer, I shall not pretend that it was. How

occupations, and developed much eagerness—had been few symptoms in earlier days—in the works of decoration or curiosity. To live in the company of such men as Meredith and Swinburne, and of friends older and newer, was not the basis for a gloom and piteous unavailing retrospect. Certain tender and some dreadful memories haunted him, but would be useless to fancy or to suggest that at that time, or for some years to come, a personal melancholy. As we proceed, we shall see what assailed him, and in what mood he encountered Christina. She has put into print a few apt words<sup>1</sup> upon the subject. She says:—

“Family or friendly parties used to assemble at there to meet with an unfailing affectionate welcome. Eccentricity, such as have been alleged, were at any rate the characteristics of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. When he was the sunshine of his circle, and he frequently chose to be so, his ready wit and fun amused us; his good-nature and kindness endeared him to us.”

Though my proper date for the present is 1850, Rossetti started upon his tenancy of Tudor City, and I will finish here what has to be said of Mr. Meredith and Swinburne as inmates of the same dwelling. Rossetti and Rossetti entertained a solid mutual regard, and together amicably, yet without that thorough give-and-take which oils the hinges of daily life. It would have been difficult for two men of the like

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share of shrewdness and of business aptitude, and a quick eye for "the main chance" in all contingencies where he chose to exercise it. He understood character, and (though often indulgent to its shadier side) he knew how to deal with it, and had indeed a rather marked distaste for that inferior class of persons who waver on the edge of life without throwing themselves boldly into it, and gripping at the life itself. But Mr. Meredith was (or I should rather say, is) incomparably more a man of the world and man of society, scrutinizing all sorts of things, and using them as his material for the commerce of life and in the field of intellect. Even in the mere matter of household-routine, he found that Rossetti's arrangements, though ample for comfort of a more ordinary off-hand kind, were not conformable to his standard. This pretty soon became apparent that Mr. Meredith's sub-tenement was not likely to stand much wear and tear, or to outlast the temporary convenience which had prompted it. I could not now define precisely how long it continued—perhaps to the earlier days of 1864. It then ceased, without, I think, any disposition on either side that it should be renewed. Friendly intercourse between the two men continued for some years, and gradually wore out without any cause or fear of dissension. In Mr. Joseph Knight's pleasant *Life of Gabriel Rossetti* I find some observations made by "a friend of himself a poet," which I unhesitatingly (let me hope rashly) attribute to our pre-eminent novelist. I quote here less as throwing light on the character of Rossetti, highly deserving though they are of attention in that respect, than as pointing to the sort of relation which subsisted between the two men during their joint existence.

pictures, and his house, altogether, had I think an immense value for good on us all, and on English art and work—being yet not un-English, and bringing into our world new subjects, and a personal character very striking and loveable.”

Mr. Swinburne remained in Tudor House for a considerable while after Mr. Meredith had left. Here there the stupendous drama of *Atalanta in Calydon* was written or finished *Chastelard*, and much of the *Ballads* (first series), and of *William Blake, a Chronicle*. I hardly remember whether he was still in the house when the *Poems and Ballads* were published, 1866, and when the jeers and the yells of British respectability) withdrew. If not then resident in the house, I was continually looking in there, and (I need not say) with all the welcome of long-standing friends and admiration for astonishing genius and attainment. It suited both himself and Rossetti that his quarters should be fixed elsewhere. One element in the case was that the painter's professional income continued to augment year to year, and he no longer found any advantage in having friends to share the expense of the house.

In the summer of 1862 both Ruskin and Meredith were abroad in Italy. Ruskin was out of health, and of spirits owing to vexations with his studies in Political Economy. In July he wrote to my brother from

“I do trust that henceforward I may be more with you. I am now better to feel your great powers of mind, and more in need of the kindness with which they are



Mr. Jones wrote to Rossetti from Venice :—

“The other day I saw a letter of Titian’s. The handwriting was absolutely, exactly like yours, as like as a forged letter of yours could be ; the whole writing a little bit bigger, I think, but the shapes of the letters as exact as could be.”<sup>1</sup>

In a letter written by my brother soon before he left Lincoln’s Inn Fields for Cheyne Walk, 21 August, I find the first mention of a painter with whom he soon became very familiar, Mr. Whistler. For several years ensuing they were on terms which, partaking of real friendliness, were more especially of great good-fellowship. This must have continued till 1872, when there was a wide gap in Rossetti’s London associations. After that date the two saw little and at last nothing—of one another. Through Mr. Whistler Rossetti after a while came to know the distinguished painter from Dijon, Alphonse Legros, who later on held the office of Slade-Professor in the London University for some years. This also was an intimate connexion, but terminated earlier than that with Whistler himself. Another letter belonging to 1862 shows that my brother was then about to engage a professional assistant, Mr. W. J. Knewstub, who housed with him for a year or two, preparing duplicates of pictures, and aiding him in various ways. Mr. Knewstub’s chief tendency at this time—not of direct service to Rossetti—was as a sketcher of comic or humorous subjects, for which he had a ready gift ; later on, as a painter chiefly in water-colours, he developed marked colourist talent. He and Rossetti were always on pleasant terms together.

A painter who seeks the help of an assistant must

wife's death. He produced a good deal, and produced, if not previously bespoke, was so true he still was not always in command of when this was in requisition, and he continued to have recourse to a convenient pawnbroker, or to a dating relative or intimate. But he was poor; he prospered more and more, and might soon have been as one of those (not too numerous) painters with a steady and very sufficient income. What he liked to spend. Money never clung to his fingers in his pocket, and he never either accumulated or hoarded. A letter of his, dated in June 1867, shows that he had no banking account, which seems surprising. How soon afterwards he began one I am not sure. It was well before 1872. Had the will been that of adding money to money would easily have been should in justice be added that, if he was not himself, he was also liberal and even generous.

## XXVII.

*WORK FROM 1862 TO 1868.*

I HAVE lumped together here no less than seven of my brother's powers—though somewhat less done than they afterwards became in the direction of ability were truly at their best. The dates extend from the beginning of his widowhood to the time when, from various causes, his mind began to decline.

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*Solomon*); *The Boat of Love* (monochrome—from a version in the *Vita Nuova*); *Lilith*; *Venus Verticordia*; *The Bower*; *Il Ramoscello* (or *Bellebuona*); Portrait of his Mother; *The Loving-cup*; *Sibylla Palmifera*; *Monna Vanna* (also *Belcolore*); *Mrs. William Morris*; *La Pia* (from *Il Purgatorio*).

*Water-colours*.—*Paolo and Francesca*, triptych (the first version of this subject, belonging to Mr. Leathart); *Heavenly Night* (or *Mariana in the Moated Grange*); *Monna Paola*; *The First Madness of Ophelia*; *Socrates taught to drink by Aspasia*; *Washing Hands*; *The Return of Tibullus to Rome*; *Tristram and Yseult drinking the Love-potion*; *La Bionda*; *Balcone*; *Rosa Triplex*.

*Designs*.—Designs for Christina Rossetti's poem *Prince's Progress*; *Portrait of Christina* (head pointing upwards, hands); *Michael Scott's Wooing*; *Aspecta Medusa*; *Isabella*; *Madox Brown*; *Aurea Catena* (has sometimes been incorrectly named *La Pia*); *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

Nothing that my brother produced was, to my mind, so thoroughly satisfactory than the *Joan of Arc*—the oil-painting which was sold to Mr. Anderson Rose, and by him to the National Gallery, not many years afterwards. It is somewhat singular that this head was painted from a German (not a French) woman named, if I remember right, Mrs. Beyer. She had one of the most classically correct and strongest profiles that one can see anywhere. Something of the same kind might be seen in the English original of *Helen of Troy*—a face less heroic but not less exactly moulded. *Beata Beatrix*—a reminiscence of the painter's lost wife, portrayed with perfect fidelity of the inner chambers of his soul—is now in the National Gallery, the gift of Lady Mount-Temple. It was less v

by many persons accounted his very best. It is called by some the best in the sense of being the most beautiful, but, in balanced brilliancy of colour, and in the softness of facial type, and first salient and most impressive impression of manifest and triumphant beauty, it yields to none. *Monna Vanna* (bought by the purchaser, Mr. George Rae) has also been called a great general favourite. *The Boat* (now in the Birmingham Art-Gallery, was a preparation for a picture, never executed, owing partly to the proceedings on the part of an intending purchaser, and partly to years. *The Blue Bower*, a female half-length, painted with more rapidity than wonted rapidity, is perhaps the most successful in colour and handling that Rossetti ever painted. It shares that praise with *La Bella Manina*. *La Bella Manina* in all respects one of the most delicate and beautiful. *Mrs. Morris*, in a gown of sumptuous blue, is the *Bower* for vigour, and far exceeds it in the same. *Sibylla Palmifera* are both works of matured skill, and stand recorded in the history of art. *Body's Beauty* and *Soul's Beauty*. *La Bella Manina* in 1868. It was then set aside for a time, and not completed until 1881.

Among the water-colours I may speak of the most successful the *Paolo and Francesca*; the design of which is the same design as in the *Tristram and Yseult*. *The Return* is also one of Rossetti's best considered designs. *Washing Hands*—a lady, with a mirror, is noticeable as being one

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Rossetti's head, and every now and then tried by his hand in different compositions. *Aspecta Medusa* (Perseus allowed Andromeda to contemplate, reflected in a tank, the severed head of Medusa) was also designed more than once. But the courage of the proposing purchaser failed him—he thought the subject too “horrid”—and this again swelled the long list of paintings which my brother did *not* do.

In Section XX., speaking of Mrs. William Morris, I have referred to the equally frequent and erroneous assertion that this lady constituted Rossetti's one sole type of female beauty. This allegation is not only absurdly incorrect, but it amounts to a depreciation of his art. It implies that he was far more monotonous than he really was, and also that he had little or no discrimination as to the type which would be the most suitable according to diversity of subject and treatment. I have elsewhere<sup>1</sup> said something on that ill-understood and ill-reported matter; and I will now, without re-producing my previous words, enter rather more at large upon the same topic. This furnishes, besides the direct object, an opportunity of saying something collectively about various persons who ought not to pass unmentioned. I shall confine myself chiefly, yet not rigidly, to oil-pictures.

Rossetti began painting in 1848; and it is of course impossible that in the early years of his practice he should ever have painted from Mrs. Morris, whom he did not see until late in 1857. We have noticed before that his sister Christina sat for Mary in *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, and in *Ecclesia Ancilla Domini*; his wife for Beatrice in a number of instances, and for Princess Sabra—and for

years, substituted in *Lilith*, and, to my thinking, advantageously so.

I proceed to other sitters not as yet mentioned. *Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee, of Troy*, an Englishwoman sat, remarkable for her not for depth of expression. Her head appeared in water-colour, just mentioned, of *Dante's Dream*. *Beloved* the chief head is from a young woman, much requested at that time among various artists. A Scotch name, I think Mackenzie. This is one of a few instances in which my brother painted an image from a professional model, and, as an experimental experiment was conspicuously successful. To the right to the spectator's right is a pure-blooded Keomi, who became known to my brother as Sandys. To the left is a pretty face, of an *espiègle*, an exalted order—Ellen Smith, whom Rossetti painted several times, beginning not long after he first met Boyce. With *Sibylla Palmifera* we come to Wilding, a damsel of respectable parentage, who met casually in the street, in April 1865, and who was determined to paint from, were it at all possible, proved to be. Having thus found a head of fine and peculiar mould, eminently strong in contour and capable of much varying expression, which he regarded as *sine quâ non*, Rossetti resolved to secure Miss Wilding's own canvases, and with this object he paid her an annual salary, which went on for a long time. She was rather than commonly indisposed, and many artists, to the extent the same, to share his discovery with an

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these works were executed at a date beyond the latest, 1868, which is properly covered by my present section; but, for our immediate purpose, that cannot be helped. It will be observed that Rossetti did not see Miss Wilding until several years after he had known Mrs. Morris; and this large number of paintings from the former—not to speak of the number of minor productions with or without colour—is itself enough to show that he was far from confining his pictorial study to the wife of the poet of *The Earthly Paradise*. *Venus Verticordia* was painted from yet another person—a remarkably handsome cook whom he met in the street. *Monna Pomona* from a Scotch girl, Jessie—a damsel of rigid virtue who had a most energetic as well as beautiful file, not without some analogy to that of the great Napoleon. *Il Ramoscello* is a portrait of a daughter of one of his purchasers and friends, Mr. William Graham, M.P. for Glasgow. Mrs. Stillman—a celebrated beauty, and the most cordial, accomplished, and amiable of ladies, herself a very elegant painter, daughter of Mr. Spartali, Consul-General in Greece—appears in the figure at the bed's head in the painting of *Dante's Dream*, and in the *Vision of Fiammetta*. I seem to see also, in *The Roman Widow*, almost as much of her head as of Miss Wilding's. Mrs. Stillman had a younger sister, Christine (who became the Countess Edmond de Cahun). She also was a beauty, but in a way less sympathetic to Rossetti, who did not, I think, ever draw from her. His sisters became known to him through Brown, who subsequently intended the artistic studies of the elder Miss Spartali. Sumner, a daughter-in-law of a late Archbishop of Canterbury, was another of his models.

I have here specified no fewer than seventeen from whom important heads were painted, known before Mrs. Morris, and some afterwards, Miss Wilding, seems to have sat at least for Mrs. Morris for coloured, and barely less often for other works. To read this account of the facts, afterwards in saying that Rossetti had only one ideal, would be a case of wilful uncandour. On this, I do not wish at all to derogate from the belief that, in the extraordinarily *impressive* and abstract—type of beauty of Mrs. Morris—his ideal more entirely responsive than any other in art. It seemed a face created to fire his imagination and to quicken his powers—a face of arcane and mysterious meaning. To realize its features was difficult, its suggestion, impossible. There was one fortification—if you could but represent its *appearance*—thereby already high in the region of the typical. For idealizing there was but one process—to conceal not conceal my opinion that my brother succeeded where painters would have done other than fail. To do genuine justice to this astonishing countenance.

As we have seen, Miss Burden—before she married Morris—obliged Rossetti by sitting for several years while he was working in Oxford in and about 1857. In her married days she sat also for the Madonna of the Triptych, and for one or two heads of Beatrice. At the beginning of 1862 Rossetti was bereft for a time of the exquisite type of beauty—the pure loveliness



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both as consummate likenesses, and as achievements in art; but I will only name the oil-pictures—*Pandora*, *Mariana* (with the Page singing), *Dante's Dream* (the head of Beatrice), *Proserpine*, *Water-willow* (which is practically a portrait of the artist), *Venus Astarte*, *Mnemosyne* (which was originally intended to be a portrait of Hero, with her signal-lamp for Leander), *La Donna della Finestra*, *The Daydream*, and *The Salutation of Beatrice* (which is rather less than completed at my brother's death).

It is apparent that Rossetti—although, as previously demonstrated, he did not by any means confine himself to the head of Mrs. Morris as his type—found this countenance available for subjects of very diverse kinds. And so indeed it is. For a Pia, Pandora, Mariana, Proserpine, Venus Astarte, Mnemosyne, there was hardly such another head to be found in England. For a Madonna, a Beatrice, a Daydream, a Donna della Finestra (from the *Vita Nuova*—the same personage as "The Lady of Pity," so designated in some of the works by Rossetti), a different head might have been equally appropriate in essence, and, to some eyes and from some points of view, even more appropriate: but, as apprehended and treated by Rossetti, both the mould of face and the expression deduced from it seem to be "in choral consonancy" with the personages, and to leave nothing at which a reasonable mind can cavil. The works are there to tell their own tale. Any one who dissents from my view will abide under his own burden. Of course I do not mean to say that

and indeed on to the very end of his life. I  
to matters proper to the years 1862-68.

For Dante Rossetti to figure as the correspondent of a newspaper was a rare thing. An occasion occurred on 15 October 1865, when he wrote to the editor to correct a misapprehension into which that paper had fallen as to his being practically a water-colour painter, as he at times worked in oils. He considered it "of great professional importance to him" that the error should be rightly understood; and explained that, he had never appeared as an oil-painter, and never having used that medium although he had sometimes worked in it, he had "now, for a good many years past" confined himself for "all his chief works."

Another matter of technical practice is brought up in an interesting way in a paper which my brother-in-law, Mr. Frederick J. Shields, the distinguished painter, contributed to *The Century-Guild Hobby-Horse* (No. 1, 1865). It may have been known to Rossetti before 1862, but I cannot fix the precise year. My brother always held in high esteem the works of this artist, and held him in the highest regard. A devout-natured man of the strictest principles, and a feeling; the bond between the two friends was very close in the last four or five years of my brother's life. Mr. Shields became his frequent and unflagging correspondent, no effort to keep him in heart and hope. He, it seems, had towards 1864 lit upon a certain "pressed charcoal," which he approved, and which Dante Rossetti. The latter at once adopted this material.

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nearly exhausted. Mr. Shields describes with some necessity the method adopted by Rossetti in the execution of his crayon-drawings—*crayon-pictures* several of them deservedly be called; and he remarks that these works easily be marred if taken out of their protecting glass. Shields's particulars are well worthy of the attention of artists; and, were my Memoir more closely concerned with details of technique, they should here be summarized.

In these years, lasting up to 1868, the circle of purchasers of Rossetti's works got pretty nearly complete. Ruskin was no longer among them, nor yet Boyce; and Anne Rose ceased for the time to be in a position to contribute. McCracken and Plint, both of them for a while mainstays of my brother's fortunes, were dead. I have heretofore on many occasions to mention Mr. Leathart of Newcastle (afterwards of Gateshead), Mr. Rae of Birkenhead, and Mr. Graham of Glasgow and London. These three were kind and personal friends, as well as steady liberal purchasers. They all were to be discerning judges of works of art, and my brother was safely commit to their hands anything that he produced, satisfied that, if he himself had ground to be fairly content with it, their sympathy would rival or even exceed his. The same may be said of Mr. Frederick R. Leyland, a wealthy ship-owner of Liverpool, and of Mr. L. R. Valpy, a London solicitor, both of whom seem to have begun commissions towards the middle of 1867. Mr. Graham came later—the close of 1868. There were also Mr. Mitchell of Bristol, who bought the *Venus Verticordia*; Mr. Crayke of Manchester, who bought the *Tillamook*; and Mr. Dalrymple of

two have now been dispersed. With the exception of Rae and Mr. Leathart, I am not certain that there is a single person owning a large number of the papers or way of studies and sketches Mr. Charles Fairfax has in London and Florence, is well provided.

My brother had not been long settled in London before he began to find that his studio was not sufficient of his requirements. As a room it was comfortable, but it was not properly a studio. He considered various expedients, consulting his friend the architect Philip Webb. At one time an iron studio in the Strand was thought of; at another, a more solid studio in the same space; at another, the resumption of a part of the cab-stables which formed part of the property, and its conversion into a studio. Finally all these more or less projects were given up, and my brother was obliged to carry out a fair amount of alteration in the plan of his existing studio-apartment. This was in 1861. He turned out his turn reasonably well, though never quite satisfied, and, in spite of occasional schemes of a more extensive residence, he went on upon this plan up to his death.

Rossetti's art-assistant, Mr. Knewstub, left him for a while, to try his own independent fortunes as an architect. Mr. Henry Treffry Dunn (who became known to me through Mr. Charles Augustus Howell, to be his assistant) was engaged in his stead. Mr. Dunn had little artistic experience and aptitude, and proved of but a small service to Rossetti, both in matters of art and as he was a steady-going man of business, and the management of the house. He ceased to be

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sperous, continued to be so increasingly for many years; indeed, notwithstanding some interruptions from ill-health and the fluctuations of the picture-market, they never dropped seriously up to the last. He earned what may be called a large income. From notes made at the time I find that in 1865 he realized about £2,050; in 1866, upwards of £2,000; in 1867, little or not at all less than £3,000. At the same date he still owed about £1,000 in one quarter or a year. In one of the Family-letters, 29 April 1876, it will be seen that he had made £3,725 in the preceding twelve months, so that he regarded this as about his then average. I suspect, however, that it was seldom if ever reached again. As a non-exhibiting painter, selling his works in a somewhat restricted circle of friends, and (though he was not at all a recluse) at a late date in his life) mixing little in general society, his success was really a surprising success. It could not have been attained if he had been other than an exceedingly disinterested man in the conduct of his professional affairs. Eulogists and detractors alike confess that there was no better bargain. I incline to think that, on the principle of "diamond cut diamond," this was one of the reasons why Rossetti was in such special favour with Mr. Leyland, of whom Mr. Rossetti testifies "it was the one real friendship of his life." No keener man of business existed than Leyland; and Rossetti must have relished—and partly disrelished—finding in Rossetti a foeman or a friend worthy of his steel. My brother knew how far he could go—so far he went; and, having fixed the terms, he knew how to stick by them, unrepentant of dubiety or demur. He was abundantly popular.

two have now been dispersed. With the exception of Mr. Rae and Mr. Leathart, I am not certain that there is a single person owning a large number of the papers or the way of studies and sketches Mr. Charles Fairfax has in London and Florence, is well provided.

My brother had not been long settled in London before he began to find that his studio was inadequate to his requirements. As a room it was comfortable, but it was not properly a studio. He tried various expedients, consulting his friend Thomas Philip Webb. At one time an iron studio in Tottenham was thought of; at another, a more solid studio in the same space; at another, the resumption of a cab-stables which formed part of the property, and its conversion into a studio. Finally all these minor projects were given up, and my brother was obliged to carry out a fair amount of alteration in the structure of his existing studio-apartment. This was in 1851. On his turn reasonably well, though never quite satisfied, and, in spite of occasional schemes of a more extensive residence, he went on upon this plan up to the end of his life.

Rossetti's art-assistant, Mr. Knewstub, left him for a while, to try his own independent fortunes as an architect. Mr. Henry Treffry Dunn (who became known to the public through Mr. Charles Augustus Howell, to be his assistant) was engaged in his stead. Mr. Dunn had little artistic experience and aptitude, and proved of but a small service to Rossetti, both in matters of

## WORK FROM 1862 TO 1868.

sperous, continued to be so increasingly for many years; indeed, notwithstanding some interruptions from ill-health, and the fluctuations of the picture-market, they never decreased seriously up to the last. He earned what may be called a large income. From notes made at the time I find that in 1865 he realized about £2,050; in 1866, upwards of £2,000; in 1867, little or not at all less than £3,000. At that date he still owed about £1,000 in one quarter or another. In one of the Family-letters, 29 April 1876, it will be seen that he had made £3,725 in the preceding twelvemonth, and that he regarded this as about his then average. I suspect, however, that it was seldom if ever reached again: he was a non-exhibiting painter, selling his works in a somewhat limited circle of friends, and (though he was not at all a recluse, even to a late date in his life) mixing little in general society. His success was really a surprising success. It could not have been attained if he had been other than an exceedingly disinterested man in the conduct of his professional affairs. Eulogists and detractors alike confess that there was no better hand at the bargain. I incline to think that, on the principle of "diamond cut diamond," this was one of the reasons why Rossetti was in such special favour with Mr. Leyland, of whom Mr. F. Leyland testifies "it was the one real friendship of his life." No keener man of business existed than Leyland; and he must have relished—and partly disrelished—finding in Rossetti a foeman or a friend worthy of his steel. My brother understood how far he could go—so far he went; and, having fixed the terms, he knew how to stick by them, unreg-

far as his relation to art goes, he feels it a made free of the art-precincts, and promoted in of a great or a distinguished painter. He is world of art much more entertaining than commerce ; and, while pluming himself upon with persons whose names are in all men's still feel that, in a certain sense, he himself " as all these fine performances would colla purchaser to sustain them. No one knew t Rossetti. His net was spread in the sigh obviously in the sight, of several birds. Of of servility he was by his very nature—but thi say—incapable.

Of literary product in these times there The poems lay buried in Highgate Cemetery years no more were written, and no thou publicity entertained. So far as I observe, verses which he wrote were for his design, —eight lines—in 1865. In January 1868 sonnet for his picture of *Venus Verticordia* a Latin distych for his *Portrait of Mrs. A* December by his sonnets named *Willow-woo* declared that he ought never to have b but rather a poet), and by the sonnet *Newb* prose, as far back as 1862-63, he had done work upon the Blake book which Alexandre left not quite completed. The amount of wh insertion in the text of the *Life* has sometin rated. Its sum-total appears in his *Collected*



## INCIDENTS, 1862—1868.

British Museum] to study Blake's coloured works there, as I could think of was to dwell on some of these. Facts, and deductions of facts, are in my line ; but to talk *about* a thing means what I could never well manage.

"I really found it impossible to know what to say more of poems, individually ; but am sincerely of the opinion I expressed in the text as to the uselessness of doing so. The truth is that regards such a poem as *My Spectre*, I do not understand it any better than anybody else ; only I know, better than some may know, that it has claims as poetry apart from the question of understanding it, and is therefore worth printing."

## XXVIII.

### INCIDENTS, 1862—1868.

IT has often been stated that my brother, at Cheyne Walk, kept from time to time a large number of animals. This is entirely true. Being fond of "beasts," and having a large garden, with plenty of space for accommodating them either in the open or in corners partitioned off, he freely indulged in his taste. He had no particular liking for an animal on mere ground of its being "pretty"—his taste being far more for what is quaint, odd, or semi-grotesque. Dante's species of fauna however were often very sightly, as also the more funny and out-of-the-way. I will name some, as they have not to come ; others have passed from memory into the limbo of oblivion.

There were a Pomcranian puppy named Punch, a g

parrakeets, a talking grey parrot, a raven, chameleons, lizards, and Japanese salamanders.<sup>1</sup>

Persons who are familiar with the management of a household easily believe that several of these animals came to a bad end. Punch the puppy would get lost ; one of the mice would get drowned ; the dormice would fight with one another, or would eat up their own tails, and gradually starve. Wolf the deerhound could get no adequate exercise, and was given away ; the parrakeets were neglected at so much cost. Rossetti was absent from home, and on his return found dead. Other animals, owing to their reclusive habits, disappeared. An armadillo was never found ; and the tale went—I believe it to be not untrue—that, having followed his ordinary practice of hiding, he turned up from under the hearthstone of the kitchen, to the serious dismay of the cook, who, supposing if he was not the devil, there was no accounting for him, could possibly be. The racoon, as winter set in, came to mind to hibernate. He ensconced himself in a large heavy cabinet which stood in the passage between the studio-door. The drawer was shut upon him, and his presence in it transpiring, and after a while he was found to be finally lost to the house. When spring came, a mysterious rumbling or tramping or whimpering was heard in the passage, or in the studio as coming from the passage. My brother mentioned them to me once, and was ready to regard them as one more symptom of the means the first or only one, that the house was haunted at last, and I think by mere casualty, the drawer was opened, and the racoon emerged, rather thinner than when he went in. What the other stories of ghosts about the

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## INCIDENTS, 1862—1868.

amounted to I have mainly forgotten, but am aware of a servant, a sufficiently strong-minded young woman, spectre by a bed-room door in November 1870. The according to Miss Caine, "was a woman, and appeared times at the top of the second flight of stairs. She retreated to the room overlooking the Embankment." My brother never beheld any such miscellaneous ghosts, nor did the idea of them disturb him in any sort of way, although in this and other instances he was not at all hostile to the notion that they might possibly be there. I will not start the question whether a belief in ghosts is in evidence of unreason; but I will say that, after making allowance for belief in their possibility, my brother's attitude of mind on the subject was not unreasonable, as he thought that, assuming their existence, they are just as much a part of the scheme of Nature and the Universe as any other thing, and therefore not to be regarded with mere panic. A disembodied spirit is the same, *mutatis mutandis*, as an embodied

The beasts upon which Dante's affections were prodigal were the first wombat and his successor the woodchuck. The second wombat, having died immediately, counted for little. No more engagingly lumpish quadruped than the first wombat could be found, and none more obese and comfortable than the woodchuck. They were both especially the woodchuck; and Dante would sit with them in his arms by the half-hour together, dandling them patting upward, scratching gently at their cheeks or noses, or meeting the woodchuck's head and hind-paws meet. With the wo-

The matutinal screeching of one or more peacocks proved so afflictive to his neighbor Cadogan, the Ground-landlord, afterwards of all Cheyne Walk leases, as has been stated in a clause to the effect that the tenants were not to have peacocks. Here, extracted from my Diary of 1871, is a curious anecdote about the peacock which perhaps deserve a moment's attention:—

“The deer that Gabriel used to have, now of course, a peacock making a great display of his train. . . . I told him about; and, though not displaying any peacock, systematically trampled out all his train feathers. Shortly after this, Gabriel gave the peacock away.”

There was one of Rossetti's animals—a Brahmin bull—as to which some burlesque got into print. Mr. Knight relates the story on the authority Mr. Whistler, who is just the man (Mr. Knight puts it) for a few humorous entries. Prinsep also relates it to nearly the same effect, on Rossetti himself as his authority. The bull was my brother and myself, perhaps in 1863, in the garden in Cremorne Gardens. He was a beautiful animal, more than a pony of small size. My brother and I paid for some £20, and I co-operated. All that followed the subsequent circumstances is the following:—The bull was brought to Tudor House, and charged through the passage into the garden. Then he was taken to a tree by Rossetti's man servant. Mr.

## INCIDENTS, 1862-1868.

"chased its tormentor round the garden," in any sense right belonging to these words. I was not however present on that occasion, and cannot aver that I even saw the zebu after he had once entered the premises.

I have just been referring to the superstitious or superstitious traits in my brother's character, which were very clearly marked. "Thirteen at table" was a contingency which did not escape his notice. In a letter of his to Mr. Brown, dated in 1864, he authorizes his friend to bring, if others, his younger daughter to a dinner, if Brown does not mind the result of thirteen at table—and he was about the last person to mind it. A later dinner was planned for fourteen, which number was reduced to thirteen by a cancellation at the last moment, and Rossetti hurried away a servant to catch a fourteenth somewhere or other. Mr. Scott says that "he began to call up the spirit of his wife at table-turning," and relates an incident of the kind happened in 1866; and he adds that "long before that year" his brother had "gone into spiritualism." I cannot say with accuracy how soon such attempts began. I myself witnessed some in 1865, '66, '68, and '70. I will not enter into details but will only say that now and again demonstrations occurred (especially some in which a Mr. Berghheim was concerned) which astonished me not a little, and for which I was am unable to account; at other times there were confusion and cross-purposes. Although Rossetti was, as I have already said, not plunged into monotonous gloom after the death of his wife, the idea of her was in these years constantly present to him. Poignant memories and

member of the Garrick Club before 1865; after the Arundel Club; and, upon its foundation early in the year, of the Burlington Fine Arts Club. This last membership (and also I) relinquished at the end of 1867, on my expulsion—which was contrary to his sense of justice as well as also to his individual liking—of a fellow-member of much distinction. I do not give the names of the other particulars. The other memberships died out of time—with no special reason except a change of interests on his part. At the Arundel Club he met Mr. Knight, Mr. Rose, and others with whom he was on easy terms. Here also he met Mr. W. S. Gilbert, who became the inexhaustible purveyor of laughter to the two continents. He did not take to Mr. Gilbert personally when the *Bab Ballads* began appearing in Punch, but Rossetti was enormously tickled with their exuberant humour and gymnastics of the ludicrous, and he would often recite many of these examples of “excellent” in all sorts of companies. He was never tired of making loud and contagious guffaws attested that neither he nor his auditors tired. I mention this small matter, not for its own sake as because it illustrates my brother’s habit of doing profuse justice to the talents even of a weak man; he neither professed nor felt the least predilection for his general sociality in these years—evidence of which I see his friends about him, whether to dinner or to a walk, and by going out to dine not unfrequently at the club, perhaps principally towards 1869—my brother was good-natured and even an accommodating host to all his familiars, when it served their convenience. Mr. Sandys became an established inmate of the house for a year and a quarter, terminating in the summer of 1870, and another painter, Mr. George Chapman, was there, on serious ill-health and otherwise “out of luck,” for a shorter period, some three or four months. He was, at attaining middle age; viewed by my brother as a man of considerable regard for his facility of invention and

portraiture, though his loose and haphazard methods of work were often the subject of some amicable remonstrance. Other friends of this period were Mr. and Mrs. Spartali and their beautiful daughters ; some other members of the Greek community in London, especially the Dilberoglues, and various branches of the Ionides family ; Mr. Dodgson (the "Lewis Carroll" of *Alice in Wonderland*), who, being a good amateur photographer, took some few excellent likenesses of Rossetti ; and Mr. Charles Fairfax Murray, who, when a mere youth, became known to my brother as an artistic aspirant, and who developed into a painter of good standing, and a vendor and collector of works of art.

There was another young man who, at one time or other, played a considerable part in Rossetti's life, and of whom it may behove me here to say something definite. His name was Charles Augustus Howell. He survived my brother, but has been dead now some few years. It was in or about 1856 that I casually met a man of some twenty-five years of age, of gentlemanly address, who had once been in the army. I will designate him by his initials, J. F. H. (the name is not Howell). Through me, and through his own rather pushing ways, he became known to various members of my circle, including my brother ; who, being kind-heartedly anxious to help him out of circumstances of great money-embarrassment, promoted his interests to the best of his power. J. F. H. made acquaintance with Mr. Howell, an Anglo-Portuguese young gentleman about seventeen years of age, and introduced him to us ; a very well-grown, pleasant-spoken, sprightly youth, looking some few years older than he then

than patriot, but in fact he was both ; and some way (but I am sure without any conscious mixed up with the procuring or the dispo- infernal machine or machines which in January exploded against Napoleon III. Before the place Howell had quitted England, and re- family in Portugal. In 1864 he was back in he sought out my brother and myself, who ha him, and felt much indebted to him for unma and so preventing us from continuing to co latter in any way.

London can have contained in 1864 few young men than Charles Augustus Howell. attractions of youthfulness and of *déplomb*. handsome though rather *outré* ; not a little like Philip IV. in the magnificent full-length by Vel National Gallery, but superior in manliness, the talent, and hair which, being dark chestnut in from the vapid effeminacy which marks the Philip. Howell had seen a good deal of the wo accomplishments and a ready insight in fin a capital and most entertaining talker. He artistic faculty of his own ; but was nevertheless facsimilist (and as such acknowledged by Rus colours and the like. Throughout Rossetti's ci became a prime favourite. He thus formed th of Mr. Ruskin, who engaged him as his secre I believe, cherished him extremely for some wh the most implicit confidence in him. I am n



## INCIDENTS, 1862—1868.

who as yet continued to be much to his taste. Collingwood, in his book on Ruskin,<sup>1</sup> makes some statements disadvantageous to Howell, impugning his honesty. I know nothing about the details, I will leave them to stand, and will also for the present leave Howell, who more than once re-appear as we proceed.

Mr. Bell Scott and his wife, leaving Newcastle-on-Tyne, settled in London in 1864, and from this date I saw Rossetti saw his old friend frequently, and continued to value him highly. He had visited Scott in Newcastle at the end of 1862, and then sat (to Mr. Downey) for that photograph which is the best known of all his portraits—a standing figure, three-quarters length, in an Inverness cape (or Tippet wrapper, as the garment was then frequently called). In the autumn of 1863 he revisited with me a few Belgian towns, and in 1864 he was in Paris for a short while—I think the very last of his small foreign trips. Towards the same time when Scott settled in London, another old friend, Thomas Woolner, dropped out of Rossetti's circle—a matter which I always deeply regretted. I cannot say that my brother was to blame, although a person much more tolerant and meeker than he might have deserved commendation for adopting a different course. He once gave me a very full account of the facts, to the following effect. He was one day with his friends, talking of Woolner with his accustomed cordiality, when one of them—the same whom, in referring to Howell, I designated as “highly distinguished”—said to him, “I am rather surprised to hear you speaking of Woolner in such terms, for he, to my knowledge, speaks of *you* in very d

Woolner commented upon with asperity were and not vamped-up imputations; but to Woolner Rossetti had given no cause of complaint at all, near or remote. My brother hereupon ceased to see him, and got to regard him with antipathy, and sometimes of him with bitterness. The sculptor indeed was sorry for his biting tongue, and there were perhaps acquaintances who, present or absent, were not subjected to its sharpness. Some while afterwards—my brother dropped in to see me one evening, followed by Woolner (for I never myself was at home to him, although in the course of later years we met). I viewed the encounter with some alarm; but without anything unpleasant, each of the two friends treating the other with ease which failed to show good-will. I was then in hopes that they might be reconciled; but no steps were taken by either party for the object, and I imagine they never met again. Woolner indeed called at my brother's house in the summer of 1847, the latter on that day was "not at home" to all visitors, and did not hear of the visit until his once intimate friend had quitted his threshold.

From Mr. Ruskin also there was a most marked severance. The two men liked one another—I am sure they even loved one another—but as time went on discrepancies began to appear not very long after they were settled in Cheyne Walk, and gradually these grew to be irreconcilable, or at any rate they remained unreconciled. There is a certain fatal divergence between an auto-

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and that, with characteristic but embarrassing candour, has unsaid in one year several things which he had said in previous years. This may have suited himself, but could not be supposed to have suited the living subjects of his comments.

I have by me four letters from Mr. Ruskin to my brother, proper to the summer of 1865; the fourth alone is dated 18 July 1865. They must all have been consequent on his seeing, in the painter's studio, the picture of *Verticordia*, with its foreground of roses and honeysuckles. They are somewhat long, and I only extract a few sentences (not always consecutive in the letters themselves) to show how matters stood:—

“(1) It is very good and pretty of you to answer so. You seem, under the (for the present) *fatal* mistake of thinking that you will ever learn to paint well by painting badly—*i.e.*, coarsely (as you come back to me when you have found out your mistake, or when you are right in your method) when you can do better. I am very glad at all events, to understand *you* better than I did, in the great sweetness of your letters.—(2) I purposely used the word ‘*very* fully’ painted about those flowers. They were wonderful to me for their realism; awful—I can use no other word—in their coarseness. Come and see me *now*, if you like.—(3) Please come now to my house, on a fine evening—tea at seven.—(4) I am very grateful to you for your letter, and for the feelings it expresses towards me. You have said them—the first and second—just as rightly as this pretty thing

to do so. I will in no wise discuss whether Ruskin was right or wrong in all this; but of one thing we may be certain—that Rossetti did *not* call upon him. He did not in any way reply to the last letter.

The only sequel that I know of to this of 1865 is that on 4 December 1866 I did call on Ruskin and his family, by invitation, and a large part of the evening did I spend in the house. Ruskin expressed a wish to resume seeing my brother, and I suggested that he would call in Cheyne Walk, and, if he did, I would be cautious in avoiding any topic of possible irritation. The following day Ruskin did, in the friendliest spirit, return my visit. I was not present, but learned that "all went very cordially—Ruskin expressing great admiration for my poem in a Death-trance" (*Beata Beatrix*), on which matter we were then engaged. I am afraid however that this was not followed up in any sort of way. Rossetti, who did not return the visit—partly from general indisposition, and partly such regulated performance, and partly apprehension that some new cause of difficulty or dissension might arise, had better have risked the chance, and gone. I think that the very last occasion when the two met was in September 1868. Ruskin then called on Rossetti, and raised some question whether the latter was doing him in efforts for social ameliorations on a systematic basis, but this was not the painter's line, and he did not take any practical steps about it. After this, there was, in my belief, no further personal meeting. In August 1870 Ruskin was elected Slade Professor of Fine Arts.

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and there is a letter from Ruskin to Rossetti, as late August 1870, perfectly amicable, and including a reference to the *Poems* then published.

In these years Rossetti developed a kind of passion for collecting curious objects of art—chairs and tables, cabinet hangings, looking-glasses (he had a special fancy for convex mirrors), pictures in a very minor way, and most particularly Japanese prints and oddities, and blue china, whether Japanese or Chinese. With the European he never concerned himself. He built up elaborate fireplaces in his house, with old carved oak, antiquated Dutch tiles, and the like. He also raised in his garden a large tent or marquee, in which we often dined in the summer, beginning with 1868. A friendly rivalry subsisted between Mr. Whistler and him, especially as to China and Japan. There must of course have been in London some fine collections of "blue china" before Rossetti's time. Mr. Huth's collection was one; but my brother's zeal and persistence were such as to send up prices in the market. The well-known Art-dealers, Messrs Marks, acted for him in many cases. One of his earliest purchases was that of a whole collection of blue china formed by the retiring Italian Ambassador, the Marquis d'Azeglio. Its cost to my brother was I think £200. In March 1867 he bought of Messrs Marks two hawthorn-pots (Rossetti invented this name), which, with their covers, cost him £120. He paid in the form of a picture, not of money down. In fact, what between his expenditure and good taste in choice, he formed a very fine display of blue china, which made his big sunlit drawing-room a sight to see. As to "the Japanese mania," which

eager pursuit, with a cargo of blue either acquired or ordered to arrive; and, as he dropped into the water, he called out "Pots, pots!" with a thrilling accent at once of achievement and of despondency. It had been the tone of Alexander of Macedon when he realised that there were no more worlds to conquer.

In the way of pictures his most notable production, a moderate-sized Botticelli, obtained at Colnaghi's in March 1867 for the small sum of £20 (towards which he sold it to a friend for £315)—a half-length of a young woman, characteristic of its painter, of a young woman in drapery, in a close architectural background. It was a little or not at all in demand at that now remote time; my brother had not something to do with the picture, soon afterwards began to attach to that fascination, and I am under a misapprehension.

In October 1869 I made a jotting: "The colour seems extinct in Gabriel these several months." It was true that it had not any recurrences from time to time; the force was now spent, and never afterwards returned to like level.

## XXIX.

### *BEGINNINGS OF ILL-HEALTH—PENKIL*

DANTE ROSSETTI had naturally a strong constitution; his muscular strength was only moderate, but in his own respect nor in others was he a weakling. He was constantly ailing on and off, nor frequently laid

ill. In various respects he remained well; and there were intervals when one could hardly say that anything distinct was amiss with him. He as yet bore attacks of illness well enough—impatiently, as was his bent, but not querulous nor faint-heartedly.

Towards the autumn of 1866 he became subject to a complaint (I do not care to define it) which required surgical treatment from time to time. The first instance was in August 1868. He minded this not at all; and I have seen him resuming painting within five minutes of one of the slight operations. But there was worse in store for him.

Insomnia began in 1867. Why did it begin? I consider that painful thoughts, partly but not wholly connected with his wife and her death, were at the root of it. Rossetti was one of the worst men living to cope with this fell antagonist. No doubt there must be some persons of a sedate or phlegmatic temperament who will make up their minds to do with little sleep if they cannot get much, and will wile away the sleepless hours in some quiet occupation, such as reading; or they may even fully submit to the inconvenience, and simply make the working day all the longer for the privation. Rossetti was not one of these, unhappily for himself. His active imagination gave him no respite; and to be sleepless was to be agitated and miserable and haggard as well. Haunted by memories, harried by thoughts and fantasies, he tossed and turned on the unrestful bed.

Towards the end of the summer of 1867 his eyesight began to fail. Sunlight or artificial light became increasingly painful to him, producing sensations of giddiness etc. Even the

and that unconscious muscular power, which in full health, been exerted to counteract this, was at the patient's command in equal measure. He did well, so far as it went ; yet it was hardly capable of supporting a painter who found himself impeded in pain. He too well remembered that his father had become lame. He began using strong spectacles, often two pairs at a time ; the other ; and, as the years progressed, he scarcely took the spectacles off, persisting in wearing them even when he was merely seated in talk with friends. In 1848 he went with Mr. Dunn on a brief trip to Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, and Kenilworth ; and late in the month of August he left town for Penkill Castle, Ayrshire, visiting his sister at Leeds, where a large art-collection had been opened. The authorities of this exhibition he had already refused to do, as they had accepted from the owners certain works of Rossetti, which he wanted to be withheld, and to which consent they reluctantly yielded. He did not like to show his productions, possibly of secondary merit, shown here and there in a scattered sort of way, but wished to reserve himself for any time—if ever this should come—to collect a number of his best works, to be viewed in a relation one with another. Such a time never came, but it was often kept in his mind's eye.

Penkill Castle is the seat of Miss (Alice) Boyd, a lady then verging on middle age, who was on intimate friendship with Mr. Bell Scott. She had known me to my brother for some few years. Mr. Scott was staying at the Castle ; and both Miss Boyd and I did a great deal to cheer and divert Rossetti. A more cheerful character and temper than Miss Boyd, or of more energy and liveliness of address, does not exist. Her intellectual power is high and her gift for painting



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## BEGINNINGS OF ILL-HEALTH—PENKILL CASTLE. 2

Besides Miss Boyd and Mr. Scott, there was a second lady staying in 1868 in Penkill Castle—Miss Losh, who was a cousin of Miss Boyd, but much older, sixty-seven years of age. Miss Losh took an extraordinary liking for my brother—in whose manner, not to speak of his genius, there was something singularly fascinating to many and to very diverse persons. Mr. Scott, in his *Autobiographical Notes*, shows that he himself had no great predilection for Miss Losh, saying that she

“had somehow or other taken a jealous dislike to me, thinking I had too much influence over her younger cousin, who entertained me so much, and who lived with us in London in the winter. She had therefore looked forward to Rossetti's appearance, fully intending to play him off against me, which accordingly she did in the most fantastic way.”

Mr. Scott approved as little of Rossetti's dealings with Miss Losh as of that lady's dealings with Rossetti. The narrative continues as follows :—

“The old lady's admiration had culminated in an offer of a large sum of money to any amount, to prevent him using his eyes in painting or in any other trying occupation. He would get better and rely on her, but till then he might depend on her. . . . She intended indeed that this plan should be a secret one between them ; but no sooner had we [Scott and Rossetti] started on our daily constitutional than he entrusted it to me [his impulsive nature was far from good at keeping secrets] with much effusion and gratitude, at the same time protesting he would never think of availing himself of her kindness. This determination I strenuously encouraged ; and we heard

March 1872, after an operation, seemingly for cataract. That Mr. Scott entertained a view of my brother in connexion with this which I know as a fact ; for, very soon after Dante's death, he explained the circumstances to me, in a tone and in terms which startled me not a little. But there may be much in this affair, as to most others. In my Diary for 1868 I find the following passage :—

“Gabriel came back to-night from Penkill. He was decidedly not better, though on the whole I think less despondent about their essential condition. His aunt [should be cousin] of Miss Boyd, has been here some time. She pressed Gabriel (whom she had never seen) most urgently to accept a loan of £1,000, to keep him in comfortable condition in case of his having to incur more. He had much ado to stave off this offer ; and she had to persuade him to accept £100 loan, for which the cheque was sent directly.”

This is of course my brother's own account. There is no corroboration of it known to me, and it needs none. At all events, to my own mind, it is true and absolutely true. I would not dispute that some time before the death of a benefactress, my brother, in no denial, to have made an opportunity for a loan ; but her death, as I have said, was sudden. In November 1868, and March 1872, there

November, contains the following details, which I may as well extract :—

“Gabriel says his eyes are certainly rather worse than better, in comparison with what they were when he left for Penkill. At the same time, they are by no means now so bad as his apprehension some little while ago had foreboded. His mind seems more quiet and cent on the subject altogether. He says the state of the eyes is not so bad in detail this :—Objects close by he can only see fairly well with spectacles. This however is nothing new, and he has not found it needful to adopt spectacles of such high power as some medical advice had suggested. Objects a little way off, or distant, he sees completely enough ; but invariably as if with a veil interposed, which he describes as like a combination of the curling of smoke and the effervescing of champagne. By experience he now believes that this interposed veil is in fact the spectrum of the last preceding object he had been looking at ; for he sees all spectra with extraordinary distinctness—would, for instance, after looking at Brown’s profile and then at a blank wall, see the profile there distinctly enough to know it as Brown, or to know the difference between such a spectrum-profile of Brown and a like spectrum-profile of me. The uncertainty of objects in a room, to his eyes, is sufficient to make him keep on spectacles continually. In painting for a longish time the sight does not get worse at the end than the beginning ; but the accumulated irritation of the weak sight makes him leave off.”

About a month after this date, or at the opening of December 1868, my brother was so far improved as to be able to resume art-work. He began by doing some crayon heads of Mrs. Morris, one of them representing her as Pandora. The state of his eyesight continued to give him

what it must be to a man of high-strung imagination to be unable to sleep at night, or to a painter to be wholly or partially colour-blind. One day, we shall discern some reason for the behaviour of this hard-bested artist, and may perhaps be able to understand some impatience the notion, put forward in his book, that there was "nothing whatever in it for him." To suggest that a more or less of this was at the bottom of it all does not in itself only adds a shadowy insinuation of weakness or imputation of fractious or pusillanimous

## XXX.

## PREPARATIONS FOR PUBLICATION

IN August 1869 my brother went back to Scotland, first spending a day or two at Ravenscroft, and then at Miss Losh. Both Miss Boyd and Scott were present at Penkill.

Mr. Scott, in his *Autobiographical Sketch*, devotes a few pages to the two Scotch visits, and I have added a few details. He considers that it was on the occasion of the first visit, seconded as it was by Miss Losh, re-aroused the interest in poetry, past and prospective. When I told him about the condition of his eyes and of my "Live for your poetry"; and this exertion had a marked effect. My brother, being

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that year, three sonnets recently written for paintings of his own—*Lady Lilith*, *Sibylla Palmifera*, and *Venus Verticordia*. The two former have since been entitled *Body's Beauty* and *Soul's Beauty*. This pamphlet-review was the joint work of Mr. Swinburne and myself, and the sonnets were inserted in Mr. Swinburne's section of the publication. I can remember that the issuing of these sonnets was done without any definite idea of following them up by other poetic appearances in verse, and therefore the conception of "little volumes for his poetry" was decidedly in Rossetti's mind before he went to Penkill in September 1868. The publication in the spring of 1868 was a sort of feeder, leading on to the printing of several sonnets in the *Fortnightly Review* for March 1869. In this latter year, soon before starting for Penkill, Rossetti obtained a Printer's estimate for the printing of various poems—those old compositions of which some copies remain in his hands after the consignment of his chief MS. to his wife's coffin, and some few others of later date. At Penkill, on this second occasion he wrote several other poems—the ballad of *Troy Town*, part of *Eden Bower*, the beginning of the long lyric of *The Stream's Secret*, *The Orchard* (prose synopsis for poem), etc. For *The Stream's Secret* he appropriated bodily the felicitous title which Scott had already bestowed upon a sonnet of his own. Scott was very properly annoyed at this; but Rossetti would have it so, and so it was. The "stream" in this poem is (as Mr. Sharp says) "the brown-pooled, birch-banked Penwhapple in Ayrshire that gurgles and lapses from slope to slope till it reaches Girvan Water"; and some of the verses were written during

but what he regarded as a manifest impulse to  
I will give his own words, which are vivid enough

“Miss Boyd sometimes drove us about the country leaving us to take those long walks I found so trying in a year. One day she took us to the Lady’s Glen, a place in which the stream falls into a black pool round which steep vertical rocks have been worn, by thousands of years of flood, into a circular basin, called, as many such places are named, the Devil’s Punchbowl. We all descended to the margin of the superincumbent rock; but never saw the expression of Gabriel’s face when he bent over the precipice into the unfathomed water dark as ink, in which some of us stood round and round like lost souls in hell. In no natural way I ever known him to take any visible interest; the colour of his pale face did not indicate such interest; it said, as I said, and I at the same moment interpreted it, ‘One step more and I am free!’ But his daily talk of suicide had not given me the chance so suddenly and unexpectedly brought to pass, paralysed him. I advanced to him—trembling, I could not speak. I could not have saved him. We were on a surface slippery as glass by the wet green lichen which had turned round, and put his hand in mine, an action which showed he was losing self-command, and that fear was the cause. When we were safely away, we all sat down together, but with faces too conscious of each other’s thoughts. The feeble-minded English law declares the suicide to be insane of mind, whereas he is anything but that. It is the power of reason alone, the only reasoning suicidal creature in the world.

I am not sure that I ever heard this matter mentioned during my brother’s lifetime, or until the appearance of Mr. Scott’s book (1892). The only source arising in connexion with it is this—Did

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of a "precipice," above an "unfathomed water dark as ink," might very well put his hand into that of a friend, to assist backwards, without having at the previous moment projected self-destruction. For the rest, Mr. Scott seems in the last sentence in my extract, to consider that suicide, under certain conditions, a very rational act—an opinion to which I take leave to agree with him. He is of course wrong in saying that the "English law declares the suicide to be of an unsound mind"; for there is no law whatever to this effect, but only, in numerous instances, the opinion or the suggestion of a Coroner's Jury.

Mr. Scott's next anecdote purports that Rossetti found on a country road a chaffinch which he picked up, and which he supposed at the time to be the spirit of his wife. I do not give the details, but am fully satisfied that they are in all essential respects perfectly true. I question how, whether, at one moment of this odd transaction, Rossetti's face wore a "curiously ferocious look." To the eye of a particular old friend—a friend, in the summer of 1869, already of twenty-one years' standing<sup>1</sup>—there may have been a look so describable. For myself, I knew my brother's face perfectly well. It was a fine face, with "looks" often varying. None of those known to me I should call noble, and not any of them "curiously ferocious." Much about the date of the "curiously ferocious" incident, or on 27 August 1869, Rossetti was writing to Mr. Shields about Scott in the following terms: "the best of philosophic and poetic nature, a man of the truest genius, and one of my oldest companions." "Look here upon this picture, and on this."

was to have them "printed for future use like"; or (to use his own words written) the object is to keep them by me as stock for the future. The prevalent notion appears to be that the poems in a limited circle as a private possession. This is but partially correct. He wanted them by him in a convenient form, and therefore, when he had so got them, to settle them with the sheets. But the whole affair of printed copies soon became obsolete.

For some while past some friends had been endeavoring to recover the MS. buried in his wife's coffin in his possession, not only of copies of several poems, but the copies (made up from scraps and fragments) which were already in his hands, but also of the original MS. of which he retained no example whatever. These were the important production namely, the MS. of the *Ballads*. I will say with precision who these friends were, and will mark Mr. Henry Virtue Tebbs (John Tebbs, Esq., law), who was then a Proctor at Doctors' Commons, and Charles Augustus Howell, as prominent among them. This suggestion Rossetti hung back for a while, but he assented. The feelings which impelled him to do so, and those which induced him to assent, were of a very any thoughtful and feeling mind. The bearing, is a painful one, and I shall not dwell on it. I will only say that, when my brother was explaining what had been done, I replied, "I am of opinion, to which I adhere, that he had



## PREPARATIONS FOR PUBLISHING POEMS.

conducted in all privacy, some gossip about it commenced pretty soon, as I observe by a letter, dated in June 1870, from Lord Aberdare, the Home Secretary, well known to my brother ever since the first project of the Llandaff Triptych from whom it had been necessary to obtain a faculty for opening the grave. Mr. Hall Caine's brief account of the matter—no other details seem to have appeared in print—as follows :—

“At length preliminaries were complete ; and one night, some and a half years after the burial, a fire was built by the side of the grave, and then the coffin was raised and opened. The body was described as perfect upon coming to light. Whilst this painful work was being done, the unhappy author of it was sitting, alone and anxious and full of self-reproaches, at the house of the friend who had charge of it. He was relieved and thankful when told that it was over.”

So now at last Rossetti was in possession of the correct form of his old poems ; and he proceeded to get these, along with some new ones, published in the ordinary mode. In copying them out he was actively assisted by Mr. Fair Murray. He thought of Mr. John Murray as publisher, but some one else thought of Messrs. Blackwood, who indeed made a direct proffer of their own ; but neither of these schemes came to anything, and the publisher with whom an arrangement was effected was Mr. F. S. Ellis, then of King Street, Covent Garden, more generally known as a leading bookseller. Ellis afterwards removed to the old-established book-shop

in a more thoroughly liberal and co  
Ellis—a man of very good literary  
as proved of late years by various per

My brother was in some respects  
self-reliance and self-mistrust. He r  
as the working-impulse and the actu  
He mistrusted himself with regard to  
upon other minds. No man was pr  
to have his way, and make his way.  
more entirely free from vanity—all  
latest years, there was more of a fus  
pride than there had been in all h  
mature manhood. Owing to pride pr  
he was the most natural of men.  
you could leave him alone ; but, if  
to take him such as he intrinsically w  
on his part at adjusting the mutual re  
compromise, half-measures, or a ven  
his own. With most people he was  
with many, tolerant ; with others, into  
himself. Intellectually he was so fra  
be said he blurted himself out. As to  
conscious of having a special faculty, a  
good work. In fact, he considered (and  
executive attainment in verse was r  
painting. To most of us it might app  
description would care next to nough  
work produced ; would abide in his o  
he had succeeded to the full, and

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have no sort of recollection of the exact steps which were taken ; but am sure that something was done, with his co-operation, so that certain editors might entrust the book to certain writers for reviewing, or certain writers might bespeak it of certain editors. My diary for 11 October 1869 contains the following passage :—

“ Gabriel called, and talked about his intended publication of poems in the Spring. He thinks it desirable to make sure of reviewers as far as possible, and thinks he can count upon handsomely favourable notices in various reviews. His plan therefore would be to send the book first to two or three papers that he can count on, and that are of leading importance ; wait for the appearance of the critiques in these ; and only then send the book to other papers, which it will reach, having already a considerable prestige about it. This is a skilful scheming ; but for my own part (as I told Gabriel) I will not diplomatize at all, but just leave the book to take its chance, and feel pretty confident of the result into the bargain.”

I have been treating this matter with great plainness, openly showing that, in my opinion, my brother's feelings and his line of action, in relation to public criticism, were other than they should have been. I am therefore all the better entitled to confute over-statements on the same subject which appear elsewhere. Mr. Bell Scott (who has gone further than other writers in this direction, and has served as authority for some repetitions of the allegation) expresses himself thus :—

“ He to the last moment *would* work the oracle, and get at

wise. He had several ardent admirers who were friends or acquaintances ; and some of these were "leading journals," or could easily, in virtue of their eminence, obtain admission for articles of theirs in such papers. The names of five who are familiar to me at once—Messrs. Swinburne, Morris, Morris, and Knight. I will not insult any one of them by raising an express question whether he would have asked Rossetti to write an article—in any sense within the connexion, be reasonably attached to that view. My firm belief is that most or all of them would have volunteered, not just because they liked Rossetti (Mr. Skelton had only a slight knowledge of him), but that their critical judgment avouched his poems to be good. I know as a fact that Mr. Swinburne's splendidly generous yet sincere eulogy contained at first some remarks which, while laudatory of my brother, might have been unwelcome to some other writers, and that it was I who, by not a little pressure, "got" him to publish it. It is not all critics who think, with Mr. Scott, that some of Rossetti's earlier poems, except *Jenny* and *My Sister's* are "comparatively boyish and worthless."

Mr. Scott, in a very friendly tone as regards Rossetti, proceeds to quote some words of mine, which I "said," but I fancy that in fact I *wrote* them in 1872. I abide by them to the letter ; but I do not put them here, as I have no wish to thrust matters forward, and what I said or wrote to Scott is precisely defined, in the note already given.

These questions seem a little captious. We have already seen that "the reluctance to publish" arose from the fact that, prior to the exhuming of the MS., Rossetti was not in possession of some poems at all, nor of the final and best form of other poems, and that, immediately after the exhuming, he set about publishing; also that "his privately-printed volume" was prepared with a view quite as much to eventual publication as to merely private issue. We have also seen how far it was "we"—*i.e.*, Mr. Scott, Miss Boyd, and Miss Losh—who "had prevailed upon him to take up poetry again." The phrase "articles ready-made *under his own eye*" can only be termed erroneous (unless we were to substitute a stronger expression). An article ready-made under his own eye must mean an article which Rossetti regulated, controlled and more or less dictated. Whether those articles really were so concocted is a question which some eminent living men could answer if they deigned to do so.

I will sum up by saying: The articles were written by competent men (some of them about the most competent in the country) who considered the critical opinions expressed in them to be true; Rossetti was not part and parcel in the writing of them; they were published under the ordinary conditions governing critical reviews. But it would have been all the better if Rossetti had not cared and had not known who was writing or not writing, or who was publishing or not publishing.

This matter of the critiques which were printed belongs properly to a date after the poems themselves had been published; but I have dealt with it here because some steps with regard to the critiques had been taken in anticipation

"Endless tumblers" is, as the newspaper order"; but, giving a reasonable interpretation, I suppose Mr. Scott's statement to be correct, that my brother was, by nature and habit, a temperate of mortals. He from the first did not drink it hardly at all; spirits he drank but dare say a month or two would often pass as touching them; wine he liked well, and in moderation on and off, as the occasion demanded; not a bad head for drinking, and could take an ordinary quantity of liquor without its usual degree whatever. I know that at Penryn he drank whisky which he relished; he would speak the name of the local purveyor, McKechnie. It was not that from this time forward a certain inclination to drink was perceptible in him. In 1861, when in London, troubled by profuse perspiration and other symptoms—as well as by weakness of the nerves—he interrupted his painting at times—he consulted Dr. Jenner, who prohibited spirits and opium, and ordered bedtime not later than midnight. He was then with but little work for a half-year to come. Mr. Shields as to this on 24 December, said:

"speak most warningly as to hours, exercise, and spirits—for which, Heaven knows, I have now a year and a half past, fallen into the constant habit of them at night to secure sleep. I have not been entirely."

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made the acquaintance of Mr. Nettleship, well known as a painter of wild animals. He was then a young man rather beyond the usual age for starting in the pictorial career; a great enthusiast for ideal and abstract forms such as that of William Blake, and a hardy inventor of a like line. In October 1869 Dr. Thomas Gordon appeared in my brother's studio. In Section X. I made a brief reference to a romance published anonymously by this gentleman, named *Vates*, much beloved by Rossetti towards 1844. Its full title is *Vates, or The Philosophy of Madness*; or, in a later issue, *Valdarno, or The Ordeal of Worship*. It appeared as a serial publication of large sheets with strange wild etchings by Thomas Landseer, very stimulating to a boy's imagination. *Vates* seethed in my brother's head, and towards 1860 he took some steps for ferreting out the author; learning that his name was Gordon and writing to him, but without any prompt result, as the Doctor was then abroad. At last however they met. Rossetti found his visitor to be a poet as well as a romancer. This was in October 1869 (Dr. Hake, in his *Memories of the Eighty Years*, has inadvertently given the date as 1871). The Doctor was then sixty years of age—a man of more than common height, lithe and straight, with very self-possessed and gentle manners, and clear deliberate utterance. My brother took to him at once, and cultivated his company; and as he had reason to know him for a real friend. Rossetti found Dr. Hake's poems singular, but very interesting and to a great extent excellent. Only a few specimens had been published at the date of the meeting in 1869.

better—seldom its equal. . . . He had a very just author was discussed, whatever might be said again insist on his merits being remembered. From jealousies he was absolutely free, and his hospitable limit. Above all, he was ready at all times to serve and exert his influence to that end.”

Another person who saw a great deal of Rossetti towards 1869, was Franz Hueffer, Ph.D., a German from Münster who talked excellent English—a man of great talent, equally accomplished at the piano and the Schopenhauer. He was a prominent leader in the musical movement, and became musical critic of the *Times*. He married Madox Brown's younger daughter, and edited the Tauchnitz issue of Rossetti's poems, and died rather suddenly in January 1889, aged thirty-three; a severe loss to some musical and literary circles, and to all persons who were closely connected with him.

## XXXI.

## ART-WORK FROM 1869 TO SUMMER 1870.

MY brother's principal works of art of this period are the oil-pictures of *Pandora*, *Mariana*, *Dante's Dream*, *Willow*, *Beata Beatrix* (duplicate), and *Veronica*; the water-colour of *Michael Scott*; and the designs for *The Death of Lady Macbeth*, *Silence*, *La Donna*, and *Dr. Hake*. Of some of these works



Gradually the conception of the picture was modified and expanded, and it assumed its present shape, the head of the Page being painted from William Graham, the son of the purchaser. *Dante's Dream*, now in the Walker Art Gallery of Liverpool, was also executed for Mr. Graham, and is much the largest painting that Rossetti ever produced. Its price was £1,575. Mr. Graham only wanted a picture of the size of 6 feet by 3½, his house in Grosvenor Place not containing available spaces adapted to works of a really great size; but Rossetti was bent upon doing a *magnum opus*, and he set upon a canvas fully 10 feet by 7. As in so many another case, he had his way, the purchaser being truly friendly and admiring, and, in spite of not a little well-grounded demur, submissive. My brother had an abortive idea about the picture, which is worth recording in his own terms, as contained in a letter to Mr. Scott:—

“I should like to try and lithograph myself that big picture of mine. If one could do something of this sort with one's invention (much the best quality I have as a painter), one might really get one's brain into print before one died, like Albert Durer, and moreover be freed perhaps from slavery to ‘patrons’ while one lived.”

The inconvenience which Mr. Graham had foreseen ensued as of necessity. The picture, begun in 1869 and finished towards the close of 1871, could only be hung on a staircase. Afterwards it was transferred, through the painter's own hands, from Mr. Graham to Mr. Valpy. The latter gentleman after a while quitted London, settling in Bath. Rossetti

in altering the colour of Beatrice's hair to a tint proper to the sitter, Mrs. Morris, is besides not wholly exempt from a partiality to be it from me however to undervalue a picture which may be fairly, and not only called great as well as large. The opinion of Scotland, Sir Joseph Noel Paton, a competent to estimate a painting as well as critics. His opinion of *Dante's Dream* (Rossetti's studio in 1881 shortly before he died in Liverpool) is expressed in a letter addressed to Sharp, which contains, among other things, the following: "Fifty years hence it will be the half-dozen supreme pictures of the age may be somewhat excessive; it is at least generous.

The duplicate of *Beata Beatrix* was made by Graham, who delighted in the original. Rossetti felt the greatest reluctance to make it, as may well be surmised, on account of the depreciations of the work with his death. He yielded, and proceeded with the duplicate, though dissatisfied with it in all respects. It differs from the first version by the addition of a figure, completed late in 1872, and was at last accepted with less disfavour than at most stages. *Veronica Veronese* (an imaginary lady) with the note lilted by a canary) embodies Rossetti's more abstract ideas as to the relation

Craven of Manchester, who owned several of Rossetti's pictures. I used to be very familiar with a cartoon-design named *The Wooing of Michael Scott*, which my brother intended to paint. It was one of his most fantastic, and in a sense one of his most arbitrary, inventions.

The designs of *Penelope* and of *Silence* rank high among the works in tinted crayons. Both the *Silence* and the *Donna della Fiamma* are from Mrs. Morris. The Portrait of Dr. Hake, done in the same medium, may count as the best miniature portrait ever produced by Rossetti, if one excepts—and I incline to do so—a head of Mr. Theodore Watts, executed in 1874. It has been lately stated—and, as it happens, by Mr. Watts—that the expression given to Dr. Hake is too heavy. It never struck me to that effect, but there has been a lapse of several years since I saw the portrait.

In January 1872 Rossetti first came into correspondence with Mr. W. A. Turner of Manchester, who later on became the purchaser of some of his pictures—*A Vision of Fiammetta*, a *Proserpine*, etc. Their relations were always very cordial. The *Vision of Fiammetta* is not to be confounded with the head named *Fiammetta* which Rossetti had ere now sold to Mr. Gambart. This was in fact the head of "Kate the Queen" excised from the large canvas on which a picture from Browning had been begun towards 1850.

authorities of the British Museum Library had the fact to slip their observation, and were not in possession of any copy of the *Poems*, 1881, having assumed a reprint of the volume of 1870; and thus one of his longest compositions, the (unfinished) *Bride*, did not then exist in that Library in any form prior to his lifetime—not to speak of other and far from trifling alterations.

My brother's health continued to be not good; his sight bad; and in the spring of 1870 he went to an estate belonging to his kind friend of old days, Mr. Bodichon, who placed it quite at his disposal. At Scalands, near Robertsbridge, Sussex. Here, overcome by much depression, he at last revived considerably when he came back to town in May, I found him much stronger than he had been for years (which was a decided improvement) and also much better. By March 1871 he was well in both health and eyes, than for some years previous.

At Scalands Rossetti was joined by an American friend of his, a friend more especially of my own, Mr. J. Stillman, who not very long afterwards went to Spertali. Mr. Stillman was originally a lawyer, then a literary man and journalist; and later on he was American Consul in Crete, during the vigorous struggle of that island against Turkish oppression. He was in contact with the Cretans; and, after suffering there from illness and a great domestic calamity, settled in London in the autumn of 1869. He has now, for several years, been domiciled in Rome, holding a very important

heard of its potency in procuring sleep—possibly he had himself tested this—and he introduced the drug to Rossetti's attention. My brother was one of the men least fitted to try any such experiment with impunity. With him it was a case of any expedient and any risk to escape a present evil; and sleeplessness was no doubt, to such a temperament as his, an evil of prime magnitude. He began, I understand, with nightly doses of chloral of 10 grains. In course of time it got to 180 grains! So at least Rossetti supposed; but I have sound reason for thinking, with much thankfulness, that in this he was greatly mistaken. His doctor, Mr. Marshall—knowing with whom he had to deal—would not, save in some instances of crisis, prohibit the drug altogether, but he took care that the chemists should dilute it to a degree of which my brother was kept severely ignorant; and, when he fancied that his dose was 180 grains, I dare say it was barely half of this, or maybe barely a third. Even after the chloral entered his house elaborate and clandestine precautions of further dilution were taken by Mr. Dunn, Mr. George Hake, and others. It is rather surprising to me that my brother never found this out; for, with all his extreme carelessness in many matters of daily routine, he was observant, and grew to be suspicious—the outcome, I believe, to a very large extent, of the chloral itself. Notwithstanding all this dilution, the dosing with chloral remained not less monstrous than the effects of it were deplorable. “I am told” (says Mr. Edmund Gosse) “that no case has been recorded in the annals of medicine in which one patient has taken so much, or even half

and many contingencies when it reasserted its vigour.

Even the chloral was not the whole of it. My brother found it nauseous, and after a while as nauseous as he wanted. Therefore, strictly as he was advised by the best medical advice against any tampering, he took to drams of neat whisky in immediate conjunction with the chloral ; not, I think—unless in the most exceptional instances—at any other period in the two years. I regret to say that I have more than once administered a dose of chloral, and then forthwith tossed him a brimming wineglass of the neat whisky, and he drank almost in a gulp. Remonstrance was in vain, and futile. I have often surmised that this method was at least as noxious to him as the chloral itself, and that he was at Scalands, and for some months afterwards, no doubt not come to this pass.

Whatever may have been the evil they were combating, my brother had good reason for believing that the chloral, supplemented by the alcohol, as an opiate, was not to be admitted that they afforded him real natural sleep. At a time have I heard him declare that the state was only be called a trance. It gave unconsciousness, but no adequate repose and refreshment. Still, the chloral, and insomnia ; and who shall say what his condition would have been if insomnia had persisted with him from the first, and from month to month, totally uncounted, how long would his brain—how long would his life—struggle on ?

paid as soon as the copies were put on sale, without waiting for actual purchase ; and by the end of July Rossetti had thus realized £450. This rate of sale could not, in the nature of things, last very long, and two events brought it to an early conclusion—although later issues of the book (there were six in all) continued going off for some while later. Dickens died on 9 June, and the sale declined. France declared war on Prussia in the middle of the summer, and the sale almost ceased. These occurrences seemed to be, and probably were, in the nature of cause and effect. Such are the odd and extraneous chances affecting a book about *Dante at Verona*, *The Blessed Damozel*, and *The House of Life*. A Tauchnitz edition of the volume came out in 1873, with a preface by Hueffer.

The chorus of praise for the *Poems* was eager, loud, and prolonged ; and certainly any steps which Rossetti may have taken for “working the oracle” (to recur to Mr. Scott’s favourite phrase) were not wholly responsible for this—far from it. Mr. Swinburne led the van with what may well be called a pæan in the *Fortnightly Review*. Now Mr. Swinburne is tolerably well known for three qualities : 1, supreme competence for expressing an opinion on poetic art in general and on particular poems ; 2, gorgeous munificence of praise where he sees it to be due ; and 3, rigorous silence as to what he deems below the requisite standard, or on occasion resolute denunciation of it. I will extract two passages from his verdict upon Rossetti :—

“It [Rossetti’s poetry] has the fullest fervour and fluency of impulse, and the impulse is always towards harmony and perfection

an influence from the mythology of the higher artists of his age, the mere physical charm of Christ or of doubt. . . . [And then such as Rossetti's *Stratton Wood* a firmer tread than the great and kindly guidance he put forth afterwards."

Mr. Colvin spoke of "the element in Rossetti's poetry that is to be remarkable for transformation of the old vein of English verse into a new vein of English verse." The writers and their encomium do so ; but will content myself with the more that was afforded the author more material after a lengthened interval, *The Catholic World*. This with Rossetti's poems in the *World* ideals, and was regarded by the *World*, on the part of a *World* was suggested to him as the *World* did not succeed in obtaining this point. The article is not

Among those who wrote for the *World* were Tennyson, Sir Henry Hallam (who published a review), Mrs. L. Norton, Sir Theodore Martin, Mr. F. Wells (of *Joseph and his Brothers*), Mr. Norton, Miss Spartali, and



ould have been different. My brother was not so absolutely skin-skinned about reviews as some people have supposed and proclaimed—although it is too true that in one instance, to be hereafter commented on, he took the matter to heart in most exaggerated and unreasonable degree. When the *Blackwood* critique appeared, he wrote to his friend Shields (August 1870) that he was surprised “to find such things producing a much more transient and momentary impression of unpleasantness than he would have expected—indeed he might almost say none at all.” Of course, in the real essence of the matter, he was always and in all relations quite indifferent to criticism, knowing well for himself what he could do, and the worth of it, and what he could not do. But this did not exempt him from being sensitive on the score of personal attack, or in view of the effect which adverse notices might produce upon the minds of others.

The great success attending the *Poems* induced my brother to think at once of re-publishing his *Early Italian Poets*. This scheme was in his head as soon as May 1870, but the re-publication did not actually ensue till 1873, when the book came out, through Mr. Ellis, with a change in the order of its contents, and an altered name, *Dante and his Circle*. He preferred now to give the first prominence to Alighicri, and to relegate the preceding poets to a secondary position in the volume. Mr. Ellis issued the book at his own cost, and halved with Rossetti such profits as accrued.

Before the end of May 1871 Mr. William Morris for himself and his family, and Rossetti on his own behalf, were intending to rent a house in the country—Kelmscott Manor-house in Oxfordshire. The nearest town was Lechlade in Gloucestershire, famous through an early poem by Shelley. The nearest having tolerable resources in the way of provisions etc. was

the subject here. The building appears on the ground of his small picture entitled "The River" gives a few descriptive particulars :-

"It is an old place, with its seven, or thereabouts, a sample of antiquity as you don't meet with in the square casements with stone mullock. The garden has its yew-tree hedges, cut by the river is flooded like a lake, so that one can see again. It is a most primitive village with a few scattered freestone habitations, some of which neighbours to interfere with the liberty

In my brother's letters to Scott the subject is carried to a storied tapestry, one of the old tapestries of Kelmscott. I combine passages from

"The subject of the tapestries is the same as the subject is carried through with that uncommonly peculiar to this class of art-manufacture. I conclude the conclusion that a tapestried room is much dimmer than this one. These things, when seen in a bright light, become a persecution to the eye. A little now to the tapestry ; though the subject of the Philistine leader should have a pantomime sticking out of her head, or what Samson has done with the ass's jawbone, is a good deal more times between more abstract speculation

I have already had occasion to mention the subject and Dr. Westland Marston in connection with the *Poems*. He saw about this time a

Ralston, and he dined there once or twice, preserving a very pleasant recollection of his visits. Mr. Gosse's opinion of my brother has been expressed in print in the handsomest terms :—

“ He was the most prompt in suggestion, the most regal in giving, the most sympathetic in response, of the men I have known or seen ; and this without a single touch of the prophetic manner, the air of such professional seers as Coleridge or Carlyle.”

Still more impulsive and indeed quaint in his enthusiasm was Philip Marston, who in 1873 wrote thus in a private letter to his youthful friend Oliver Madox Brown :—

“ What a supreme man is Rossetti ! Why is he not some great exiled king, that we might give our lives in trying to restore him to his kingdom ? ”

At Kelmscott Rossetti wrote a large amount of new poetry : *Cloud Confines* (which he termed “ my very best thing ”), *Down Stream* (first called *The River's Record*, which was written in a punt on the Thames), the beginning of *Soothsay* (originally entitled *Commandments*), some thirty fresh sonnets for *The House of Life*, *Sunset Wings*, and *Rose Mary*, which was finished towards 13 September 1871. He began by writing a prose synopsis of this poem, which did not as yet contain the *Beryl-songs*. These had better not have been added, and so he himself thought eventually. The *Cloud Confines*, and also the old prose story of *Hand and Soul*, were published in the *Fortnightly Review*. There was also a grotesque ballad about Mr. Robert Buchanan consequent upon the review-

*Rossetti*—and signed Thomas Maitland. In this article Thomas Maitland was not the author was the verse-writer—or let us say Buchanan. Some skirmishing in the matter was not free from confusion and self-confusion. It was this—that Mr. Buchanan had been the author of an anonymous attack upon Rossetti, and the *Contemporary Review* turned it into a personal attack. One poet who assails another anonymously where anonymity is in no degree the more graceful a very graceful position; and the poet who justifies his anonymous and aggressive attack by apprehending, an ungraceful position. On the grounds for affirming (and I will prove) that Mr. Buchanan was from the first the author by a person who had every right to be anonymous, and *à fortiori* not pseudonymous. I repeat—what was said in some papers was there was plain mendacity in some of the attacks. But it seems to behove me to say a little more of *The Fleshly School of Poetry*—*Mr. Rossetti*—I take to myself any blame which may befall it; belong to me; for I have more than one reason to think that the animus against my brother, and against Mr. Robert-Thomas Buchanan-Maitland, is as a vicarious expression of resentment which myself had written. Thus then.

Mr. Swinburne's volume of *Poems* excited a fluster in 1866, a burlesque in the *Spectator* for 15 September 1866, named *Poets*. It was anonymous; but rumoured to be the work of Mr. Swinburne.

" With language so awful he dared then to treat 'em,  
 Miss Ingelow fainted in Tennyson's arms ;  
 Poor Arnold rushed out, crying ' Sæcl' inficetum !'  
 And great bards and small bards were full of alarms :  
 Till Tennyson, flaming and red as a gipsy,  
 Struck his fist on the table, and uttered a shout :  
 ' To the door with the boy ! Call a cab ! he is tipsy !'  
 And they carried the naughty young gentleman out.

\* \* \* \* \*

" Then ' Ah !' cried the Chairman, ' this teaches me knowledge :  
 The future shall find me more wise, by the Powers !  
 This comes of assigning to youngers from college  
 Too early a place in such meetings as ours.' "

About the same time I was writing for an American quarterly a review of Mr. Swinburne's poems. It was eventually published, not in America, but as a brochure in England under the name of *Swinburne's Poems and Ballads, Criticism, by William Michael Rossetti*, 1866. Bearing in mind Mr. Buchanan's—as I thought it—gratuitous and insolent attack upon a poet already so illustrious as Mr. Swinburne, and entertaining the opinion that much more than commensurate laudation had been bestowed by review upon the volume (or volumes) of verse which Mr. Buchanan had up to that time published, I opened my *Criticism* with the following sentence :—

" The advent of a new great poet is sure to cause a commotion one kind or another ; and it would be hard were this otherwise times like ours, when the advent of even so poor and pretentious a poetaster as a Robert Buchanan stirs storms in teapots."

my brother's volume of *Poems* came criticized by Mr. Buchanan (so far October 1871, when the article in the appeared.

This article was (to use no other expression) Rossetti. It was afterwards considered severity, direct and implied, was increased as a pamphlet-volume of about 100 pages of *Poetry, and other Phenomena of Buchanan* (Strahan & Co., 1872). I was showing what opinion Mr. Buchanan of performances. These extracts come direct and are (practically speaking) verbatim understood that the "Thomas Maitland" general conformity with them.

The *Poems* (we are told) exhibit healthy forms of life. Nothing is nothing completely sane. There is many pieces. A sickening desire is even sensual mood. Rossetti has not given noteworthy piece of art. He is fleshly of his hair to the tips of his toes. The poems, and breadth of poetic imagination rhymes become the rule, and not the of *Sister Helen* is repeated with little thirty-four verses (as a fact, it is repeated essential alteration, and Mr. Buchanan "between Hell and Heaven," changing Heaven and Hell," and so spoiling

lust. In Rossetti's poetry there is a veritably stupendous preponderance of sensuality and sickly animalism. He and Mr. Swinburne merely echo what is vile. I see in Rossetti no gleam of Nature, not a sign of humanity. [On a passage from *The Portrait*] Was ever writing so formally slovenly and laboriously limp? [Then, in general] Treatment, down to the tiniest detail, frivolous, absurd, and reckless. As shapeless and undigested as chaos itself.

On such abuse as this, wholesale and retail, I will not express any view of my own, nor solicit the verdict of the reader. About twenty-four years have elapsed since Mr. Buchanan wrote. If public opinion in that interval has ratified, or gone near to ratifying, his dicta, I remain under a mistake. If public opinion at the present date should avouch that the man who could thus express himself must have had in view some object extraneous to the fair and moderate expression of a candid conviction, I should be far from astonished.

According to my recollection of the facts—of which I had adequate personal knowledge at the time—my brother was but little troubled, and not downcast at all, by the article such as it appeared in the *Contemporary Review*. He had all along expected that some one or other would make a point of assailing him. He knew himself to be above such an assault as was now delivered, and felt moreover that the fact of the pseudonym, and the ambiguities which had accompanied it, gave him a considerable advantage as a defendant. Mr. Scott—with an inaccuracy as to date which is very habitual to him—relates how, “as midsummer 1872 was drawing on,” he gave a dinner-party which Rossetti attended; and how

the latter shouted out the name of Rossini. "he had discovered to be the writer of the article." "from this time he occupied himself with no other reply." It is certain (as one of the Family my brother had been informed about the middle of October 1871, and that he undertook a reply for publication. My brother's reply was quite erroneous. To his other brother's demur, but he seems to think the work is more worthy than I can. My brother was informed and, being (it is to be supposed) acquainted with him, and known to be on his side of the matter, he may very likely—and very harmlessly—be more vociferous than those drawing-room manners for which Dickens gave the "prisms" would dictate.

It is certainly true that he set-to with Buchanan—a fact which is in no wise inconsistent with what I have just been saying about his position under the *Contemporary* attack. He was not so much say virulently, assailed; and this more than the imputed moral obliquity than of political comings. To be ridiculed was what he was vilified as writing from impure motives. To public impurity was what he would have been much better—and more to the time—to take no part in the controversy. Anonymo-pseudonymous attack to do perhaps little general memory of it.



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## THE FLESHLY SCHOOL OF POETRY.

*The Stealthy School of Criticism*.<sup>1</sup> To me *The Stealthy School of Criticism* appears a very sound and telling piece of vindication. It rectifies some positive mis-statements contained in Mr. Buchanan's article, and sets the whole question in a much more correct light than the latter had succeeded in casting upon it, or perhaps had been minded to supply. The pamphlet itself, including this extracted portion, was sent into print, with a view to its being published by Mr. Estlin; but on consideration it was held to be such as might lay the author or the publisher open to an action at law—possibly on the ground, "the greater the truth, the greater the libel," and it was withheld, and ultimately destroyed. I heard of it at the time; but long ago I had quite forgotten its treatment and details—which were assuredly not scurrilous, but I say sarcastic and stinging enough, for my brother was the reverse of a bad hand at that sort of thing when he came to take it up. He was displeased, indignant, and perhaps incensed, and disposed to "give as good as he got"; but as I have said, not seriously wounded nor deeply mortified so far as the *Contemporary* article went. I can even remember that he was frankly amused at some remarks by Mr. Buchanan upon certain rhymes in his volume—such as "wet" rhyme with "Haymarket"; and he thought that Mr. Buchanan had made a very neat travestie of them as follows:—

"When winds do roar and rains do pour,  
Hard is the life of the sailor;  
He scarcely, as he reels, can tell  
The side-lights from the binnacle:  
He looketh on the wild water," etc.

art, always inclined to say  
them as he thought deserved.

Mr. Buchanan, having met  
Rossetti, was not to be ap-  
much more envenomed ; and  
I have said) his pamphlet-  
more systematic, and more  
original review. He here  
as well as some other poets  
the propagation of whatso-  
disgusting in vicious displ-  
its predecessor, is only v-  
living generation of read-  
gotten, the better for all o-  
Mr. Buchanan himself.

I can say this without an-  
side. It must likewise be  
whose feelings in the matter  
or express any especial con-  
acknowledge that, when a  
straightforwardly, and in a  
perhaps have openly respo-  
his grave. Mr. Buchanan,  
to "An Old Enemy," his re-  
and, besides some other ret-  
*Academy*, 1 July 1882, "I  
never was a Fleshly Poet"  
Caine, soon after Rossetti  
following phrases. I only

## THE FLESHLY SCHOOL OF POETRY.

protest was received in a way which turned irritation into wrath into violence. I was unjust, as I have said ; most unjust. I impugned the purity, and misconceived the passion, of writing hurriedly read, and reviewed *currente calamo* [but several months had elapsed between the publication of the review-article and of the pamphlet]. I make full admission of Rossetti's claims of the purest kind of literary renown ; and, if I were to criticize his *now*, I would write very differently."

There is another phrase which seems to go near to admitting that Mr. Buchanan—in 1871, and also in 1872—attacked Rossetti just *because* other critics had praised him :—

"At the time it [the review-article] was written, the newspapers were full of panegyric. Mine was a mere drop of gall in an ocean of *eau sucrée*."

But even this is not quite apposite to the facts. The "newspapers" had had their say about Rossetti's *Laus* towards April and May 1870, whereas Mr. Buchanan's pseudonymous article appeared in October 1871.

Let me sum up briefly the chief stages in this misadventure and in some aspects disgraceful, affair. 1. Mr. Buchanan attacked, whether anonymously or pseudonymously—being a name of veritable or reputed—attacked another poet, a year and a half after the works of the latter had been received with general and high applause. 2. He attacked him on grounds partly literary, but more prominently moral. 3. After he had had every opportunity for reflection, he repeated his attack in a greatly aggravated form. 4. At a later date

Not long after Rossetti's death an article *of Rossetti* was written by Mr. Harry [unclear] published in that same *Contemporary* reviled the man during his lifetime. I am very far from being exclusively so. Some of the things in this article appear to me to be among the most acute which have been spoken on that subject, "fleshlyness," and I will give them here. I will not while I regard it as a gross calumny to say that I am in any marked sense an adherent of any "School of Poetry" (if such there was), I do not connect some things in his writings to which a certain degree of sympathy, may, from his own point of view, legitimately be ascribed. The real question is not whether Rossetti was a poet, was "fleshly," but whether certain modes of treatment and forms of expression be admitted into poetry as a wide domain or as a narrow domain. To this question I will not give the most sufficient answer is that all the greatest poets, in all countries and ages, have admitted them; and I will go a step further, presuming to rank Dante Rossetti with the greatest, I will say that very few of them have admitted those subjects, modes of treatment and forms of expression. I now cite from Mr. Quilter

"It was said once, by a writer anxious to mark the Præraphaelite school of modern poetry, the characteristics of Rossetti's poetry were 'fleshly' and 'feminine'."

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## HYPOCHONDRIA AND ILLNESS.

unexpected and unnecessary, that gives, to hasty readers and superficial critics, such a wrong impression. And, in the same way, he charges a poem with more colour and form than it can well bear with reference to its special subject, so does he charge his pictures with a weight of idea which their form and colour scarcely require, and in both he calls upon the spectator to be at once the witness and the interpreter of his work. From this there results in his poetry the following effect—that he is at his finest when he has to tell some plain story, or exemplify some comparatively simple thought, the insertion into which of physical facts will heighten the meaning rather than jar upon it; or in verses which treat intellectual subjects from a purely sensuous basis, such for instance as in those sonnets which are concerned with the passion of love. When however he seeks to treat either a purely intellectual or a purely spiritual subject, he fails almost inevitably, and that apparently in painting as well as in poetry. Like Antæus, if he is held off the earth too long, his strength fails him. It is this painter-like quality which makes his verse so puzzling; for in idea it is, almost without exception, of a singularly pure and intellectual character. Turn from his verses to his painting, and the same curious contradiction is forced upon your attention. We find continually, in his pictures where the painter's individuality is most manifest, that the reproduction of the sensuous part of his subject is, so to speak, interfered with by the strangely half-refining, half-abstract quality of his intellect. . . . All the physical peculiarities to be traced in his works are all due to a passionately sensuous but equally passionately intellectual nature like Rossetti. They are the record of a man whose sense of beauty was always being disturbed by his sense of feeling."

attending it, and anxieties and failure of eyesight; insomnia, palliatives. Still, on the whole of 1871, and even on to the moderately healthy man, and if not exactly a happy one. For of contentment is essential; an imagination and vehement desire of surroundings than with himself never contented, and therefore not. His aspirations, though to some no means soothed into serenity for no aspirations, properly to the little life which is rounded and endowed him with an ample stock of high spirits. These served to whet himself and for his friends, while more like a surging mist of gloom, was a successful man: successful - necessarily in a small circle, a more successful and acclaimed wider public. Achievement in always longed for, for these he to general recognition he was not thrown in a more than wonted shadow. Loving and beloved by his family and friends, acknowledged by his friends, out by strangers as a man of

that my brother—being “put out,” though not gravely perturbed, by the *Contemporary* article, and by the announcement that it would soon be enlarged and re-published separately—must have got even worse sleep than usual, and must have exceeded more than usual in his chloral-dosing and its concomitant of alcohol. Certain it is that, when the pamphlet-edition appeared (which was towards the middle of May 1872), with its greatly enhanced virus of imputation and suggestion, he received it in a spirit very different from that with which he had encountered the review-article, and had confuted it in *The Stealthy School of Criticism*. His fancies now ran away with him, and he thought that the pamphlet was a first symptom in a widespread conspiracy for crushing his fair fame as an artist and a man, and for hounding him out of honest society. Most of his friends, myself included, combated these ideas. I question whether his closest confidant, Madox Brown, did so with adequate energy, for he himself, though reasonable and clear-headed, was of a very suspicious temper in professional matters, and held himself and his immediate circle to be not a little ill-used. My brother's notions were, as I have said, fancies, and fancies bred, not of a temperate consideration of facts, but of the constitutional and mental upset caused by a noxious drug. Still, it is manifest, upon the face of his booklet, that the charges brought forward and reinforced by Mr. Buchanan were by no manner of means light ones. They were sufficient—if believed, which I suppose they very scantily were—to exclude Rossetti from the companionship of virtuous and even of decent people; and it was no fault of this “accuser

that it was by no means a fair estimate of much of whose work he rated especially. In January 1872, in a *temporary* article and the pamphlet which the *Quarterly Review* (I have called it Courthope) which was unfavourable especially to Mr. Morris, less so to Mr. Hall Caine has spoken of other than the *Edinburgh Review* and the *British* and other details, if ever known, are in my recollection. I can dimly recall the *Echo*, one word in which, "coward," was my brother unduly. This article—reason—has been ascribed to Mr. Morris, overstrained was the balance of his mind. My brother seriously consulted me, and it was not be his duty to challenge the challenge to a duel. I need hardly record my opinion that the common-sensible country are equal to Mr. Buchanan's own preface to his pamphlet, the same offensive word. After refusing to give a defence, and the opinion of Mr. Morris, I was pleased to say (and to this also Mr. Morris—"I have only one word to use of my own myself. They are the inventions of a flatterer to bear criticism, and too much to perceive the real issues of the question to have occurred to Mr. Buchanan. The term "coward" applies more pro-



*Fleshly School of Poetry*; but, as a biographer, I could not from this point onward tell a word of truth unless I gave it prominence. In my brother's life it was deplorably prominent, though in itself of hardly more importance than some one's bad breath passing across a looking-glass and slurring it for a moment. The whole matter grieved me exceedingly at the time, and will always continue to grieve me in reminiscence or record. It is a simple fact that, from the time when the pamphlet had begun to work into the inner tissue of his feelings, Dante Rossetti was a changed man, and so continued till the close of his life. Difficult though it may be to believe this of a person so self-reliant in essentials as Rossetti—one who had all his life been doing so many things just as he chose, and because he so chose, and whether other people liked them or not—it is nevertheless the truth, as I know but too well.

On 2 June 1872 I was with my brother all day at No. 92 Cheyne Walk. It was one of the most miserable days of my life, not to speak of his. From his wild way of talking—about conspiracies and what not—I was astounded to perceive that he was, past question, not entirely sane. He went round for Mr. Scott, then living at No. 92 Cheyne Walk; and he (so I noted in my Diary), "as usual, acted in a spirit of the truest and kindest friendship." This seemed to be the occasion of which Mr. Scott speaks in his *Autobiographical Notes*. He says that "Mr. Marshall and Dr. Hake were there," but my own impression is that that was on a slightly later day. It is a rather curious coincidence that, on this same 2 June, my brother completed the sketch of the picture of which he had painted the background so far back as 1850 at Sevenoaks (see Section XVI.), and which he had recently completed under the name of *The Bow*.

with which the picture-dealer received it, that, if the picture were not considered at its price, the agreement might be cancelled. The transaction was not less strange as coming from the hands of artists at making a bargain, than as coming from a dealer (Gambart's successor) who was not in the least in the care of himself.

Another most unfortunate circumstance occurred at the same time—I think a day or two after. Rossetti had just published his singular poem *Fifteenth Century* (as in previous instances) a present to his brother. The latter looked into the poem with the astonishment of bystanders, he at once perceived the lines at its close as being intended as a reference or as a spiteful reference to something which might be alleged to have occurred at that moment he relented, with an effusion of sympathy to his attached, and illustrious friend; but in a moment the scarcely credible delusion returned. He perceived as a leading member of the "conspiracy" which, to last, I was never able to discern the truth. He had ever been expelled from the party. He saw no more of Brownings with him no more; and on one or two occasions, the great poet, the object of Rossetti's homage, kindly enquired of me concerning him. On a wish to look him up, I was compelled to refuse, lest worse should ensue—no more in a very absurd and unaccountable

called *The Hunting of the Snark* were in fact intended as a pasquinade against himself. So Mr. Dodgson was another member of the conspiracy.

Thus then on 2 June I was dismayed to find my brother an actual monomaniac. I, who had known him from infancy, had never before seen or surmised the faintest seed of insanity in him. Wilful indeed he always was, but, so far from being mad, his strong idiosyncrasy had never trenched even upon what can be called the eccentric. He was eminently natural, as very many Italians are; and in this quality he followed, to my thinking, rather the Italian model than the English, which latter derives more from sturdy straightforwardness than from direct temperament. He was easy, abrupt when he liked, and transparently intelligible—except in so far as a high and subtle mind baffles one of a dull or conventional order. On that fatal 2 June, and for many days and months ensuing, I was compelled to regard my brother as partially insane, in the ordinary sense of that term. It was only after an interval of time, and as I had opportunity to compare and consider the opinions expressed by medical men and others well qualified to judge, that I came to the conclusion that he never had been and never became thus insane at all, but was on the contrary the victim of chloral, acting upon strained nerves, mental disquiet, and a highly excitable imagination—all these coupled with a grievous and fully justified sense of wrong. For many years past my conviction has been that hypochondria, consequent upon the over-dosing with chloral and alcohol—this, and not anything dependent upon constitutional

the chloral, but without leaving incentives of which I have just the cause, his mind was truly not supposed things contrary to real delusions or hallucinations. Afterwards—any visual delusions, as I shall have over-

Mr. Marshall was called in, summoned also Dr. Maudsley, diseases. My brother, in his Dr. Maudsley, and even went probably no doctor, but some a sinister purpose. Of course medical inspection and consultation accuracy what was the precise formed of the case.<sup>1</sup> He agreed care was requisite, and a cessation.

Dr. Hake, in his *Memoirs* with much good feeling about scrupulous reserve which marked in any reference to a patient. of the Rossetti family in those some of his observations, and s

"One morning [I consider the 7 June] I visited him [Dante Rossetti] that the restlessness of the past night. Qualifying his request with an expression not to stay. His medical att

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## HYPOCHONDRIA AND ILLNESS.

to Brown, though I do not now realize to myself his presence] came to Roehampton; and I remember well his saying, as he sat in my quiet drawing-room, that he was enjoying what he had so long ceased to feel, and that was peace."

I recollect that dismal cab-journey from Chelsea to Roehampton. It brought out the state of physical delusion besetting my brother as to sounds; for he insisted, several times during the transit, that a bell was being rung on the roof of the cab, to his annoyance; and, at the moment of dismounting at Dr. Hake's door, he tartly apostrophized the cabman with the words, "Why did you ring that bell?" The cabman looked blank, as might be expected. He had often been called for my brother from a neighbouring railway, and it is probable that, on getting back there, he imparted his opinion that "there must be something queer with Rossetti."

Dr. Hake's next phrase (which I shall proceed to quote anon) is "He sat up late in conversation" etc.; but to me it seems that he here mixes up the transactions of two different evenings. We arrived at Dr. Hake's house quite after dark, perhaps towards 10 P.M.; and little, I should say, was done beyond settling down for the night. The next day—Saturday, by my reckoning—happened to be a very untoward one for my brother's retirement. It was the day preceding Wednesday (or some such holiday-time); and, when we were out under Dr. Hake's pleasant escort, we found any number of gipsy-vans and other vehicles encumbering the high-road, Rossetti's roaming ideas being still in the ascendant.

luck would have it, this passage de-  
monkey pranks played by Caligula  
his submissive senators half out of  
depicted bore a perilous analogy to  
branches of my brother's brain. I can  
greatly urged by him to proceed, as  
too-appetizing details. I now recur to

"He sat up late in conversation with  
family-matters ; but his night was the most  
hitherto passed through."

The Doctor's laudable reticence was  
followed by Mr. Bell Scott, who, in his  
says :—

"A cab was brought at once. We asked  
him [Rossetti] so willing to go ; but that  
wanted to be secluded, and for three days  
only by a treatment invented for the morbid  
was he cured."

It will be perceived that Mr. Scott  
Dr. Hake in mixing up the occurrences  
and night with those of Saturday night.  
Dante Rossetti should have been in  
house occupied by Dr. Hake, with  
and with my company to boot, though  
which he could command solitude if

Putting together the statements made  
the reader may readily infer that some

heard (this was of course a further instance of absolute physical delusion) a voice which twice called out at him a term of gross and unbearable obloquy—I will not here repeat it. He would endure no longer a persecution from which he perceived no escape. He laid his hand upon a bottle of laudanum which, unknown to us all, he had brought with him; swallowed its contents, and dropped the empty bottle into a drawer. Of course his intention was suicide; but it was a case in which suicide was prompted not only by generally morbid and fallacious ideas but by a real hallucination, and one therefore in which the constant verdict of “unsound mind” would have been both admissible and necessary. How he had obtained the laudanum I never knew. Maybe he had long had it about him as an opiate, even before he began the nightly course of chloral.

The Sunday opened calmly and hopefully. The fact that my brother did not appear at the family-breakfast was only conformable to his ordinary habits. Dr. Hake went up in two or three instances, and always found him sleeping with extreme placidity. He encouraged me to hope that this might be the beginning of a new lease of natural sleep, and that Dante would soon be taking a marked turn for the better. At last—this may have been towards four o’clock in the afternoon—he came down again, with an exceedingly grave face. He told me that such unusually prolonged sleep did not seem natural; that my brother’s appearance was no longer satisfying to a medical eye; and that the symptoms might almost point to serous apoplexy. I ran out for a neighbouring doctor who came at once. His name has now